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DETECTIVE STORIES

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

MARCH 1, 1924 NO. 151

DOUBLE FEATURE

"THE ONE CHANCE"

by

Thomas Ripley

and

"BY THE BREADTH OF A HAIR"

(Two Part Story) by

ARTHUR B. REEVE

and

MARGARET W. REEVE

MARCH 1, 1924

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Special Notice

THE next feature story to appear in this magazine contains one of the most puzzling mysteries ever written by an author. Every shred of evidence points to the convicted man, and yet a shrewd young crime investigator proves his innocence in a most ingenious manner. You will be more than pleased with

"WEAPONS OF HATE"

It is written by ERIC HOWARD, an author who grasps your interest and holds it from the beginning of his novelette.

Read This Story!

There will be a number of short stories of splendid quality, each one the work of a well-known writer. They are filled with exciting incidents woven around clever plots, and will afford our readers unlimited enjoyment. The titles are:

"THE KALUNG KISS," by Douglas M. Dold
"CAT FEATHERS," by Oliver Guy Magee
"THE BARSTOW CASE," by T. Werner Phelps
"WHISPERING EYES," by Ernest A. Phillips

Please do not overlook the fact that a new two-part story begins in our next issue. We have selected one that is full of human appeal—how a tiny baby won the love of a big rough cracksman. It is written by J. B. Warrenton, a powerful writer of genuine detective fiction. It is called

"RED MURRAY — KIDNAPER"

We shall also have a splendid article by ALLAN VAN HOESEN that will interest all readers of serious subjects, entitled

A NEW PLAN FOR TRAINING DETECTIVES

It shows how the municipal detective is trained for his work, and is a school that was inaugurated by Commissioner Richard E. Enright.

Don't Miss This One!

Our usual collection of short articles will consist of some choice reading matter on all sorts of peculiar subjects. They have been selected with great care to suit our readers.

WATCH FOR THEM!

We have a large number of splendid feature stories by the most brilliant writers, and some of the most interesting articles, sketches and short stories scheduled for our coming numbers. Keep your eyes on this page for the announcements.

THE EDITOR.

The ONE CHANCE

by Thomas Ripley

David Westman, alias *Swifty*. Age 30. Height, 5 feet 11 inches. Weight, about 150 pounds. Clean-shaven, high forehead, prominent cheek bones, square jaw, deep blue eyes. Subject has a set smile about mouth, talks very little, but encourages confidence. He is a college graduate, highly cultured and speaks French, German and Spanish. No scars. Westman was convicted December 18, 1919, for safe robbery and sentenced to serve five years. Fingerprints: 12-R-U-I-10; 21-U-OI-14. Released June 26, 1923, for good behavior and illness. He contracted tuberculosis.—*From Bertillon Officer's Records.*

CHAPTER ONE

FOUR men—detectives from headquarters—pressed back in the dim shadows of the wall in the main office of the Gold Colossal Department Store, and as they did so the rays of a flashlight bit through the darkness of the spacious room.

The long finger of the light came from the only door entering the office, and it played swiftly around the room for a second, then went off. For some unknown reason it missed the half-squad of officers, who, with drawn Colts, were watching the dark figure of a man stepping into the room. He advanced slowly with but a step at a time, and in another dozen seconds he turned the light on again. This time it fell directly upon the huge safe and shrouded the great door in its glow. For only a second it remained there, then it vanished in the blackness, and like a shadow the man darted across the room and dropped to his knees before the safe.

Poised like dogs on the point, the four men from Headquarters watched the blurred figure on the floor. Even in the darkness they could discern him drawing on gloves, and when his light, flashing on for a second to locate the combination dial, revealed his countenance, they recognized the face of Swifty Westman. And then and there, for the first time in history, these four men from Headquarters witnessed this man at work—saw him, the man who in other years had bewildered the world with his mysterious power over locks of the country's heaviest of strong boxes, in action.

Time was not wasted upon preliminaries, but with his ear close to the dial Westman began. Every movement was measured to the perfection of the artist that he was. He was patient and positive, and so abstracted was he from all but the task before him that the officers might have moved and received no notice. Time after time he started anew and for ten minutes the tense

stillness of the room was fractured only by the metallic grating of the dial and an occasional, half-suppressed cough from the man manipulating the combination. But this ten minutes brought Westman to the fulfillment of his purpose—he had at length found the figures on the dial to open the safe. He tested them once, then systematically he moved the dial forward just so far; moved it in the reverse and then forward again. The officers could imagine the orderly falling of the tumblers, and as the last one slipped into place they listened to a grunt of satisfaction from the expert as he fell back exhausted. Quickly he brought himself up and tugged a second at the heavy bolt. Then followed a sharp, metallic snap as of steel slipping from steel, and the great door swung back on its hinges.

The flashlight came into play again and revealed the inner door of thin metal. It was for hardly more than a second—just a flit that the light was on—then the officers saw Westman, with a deft hand, lift a huge hammer into play. One swing and a smashing blow rendered the lock of the inner door useless. A short pry-bar which he held finished the job and this door fell back. Westman was a rapid worker, and it was only a matter of seconds for him to gain access to the compartment of the safe containing the currency he sought.

One, two, three packages of bills were quickly transferred to his pocket, but befor the fourth left the safe the officers, upon a given signal, commenced action.

"Stick 'em, buddy!"

The voice of Sergeant Starnes sounded like the crack of a whip in the still room, but Swifty Westman, squatting there like a cornered fox, glaring into the circle of light that held him, moved not a muscle.

Instantly, with the command of the sergeant, three other lights played upon the man. The officers had spread themselves out fan-shaped and were ready for the capture. But still Westman failed to move his hands ceilingward. From his crouching position he swept the situation into comprehension with one glance and realized that it looked hopeless—he was bagged. Somewhere there had been a bad bungle in his plans—somewhere he had been thoughtless. He could not help but think of it now in his present predicament. He was down, dead to rights, but——

His automatic lay at his feet just exactly ten inches from where his hand rested upon the iron door of the safe. He measured this distance very carefully and then calculated just how many fractions of a second it would take him to snap the gun into play. He gauged these deductions with the greatest possible speed of his captors and then moved.

Four streaks of deadly fire jabbed the darkness and the barking of four Colts was followed by a shower of hissing lead that fell about the room after spattering against the safe.

CHAPTER TWO

WHEN Westman snatched his gun from the floor the lights which had been trained upon him went off and he vanished from view. Therefore the officers were shooting by guess. Westman had reasoned that this would happen. He knew that each man who held a light would not expose himself to such a target by leaving the bright eye of his lamp on, and the instant between the time the beams of light went off and the firing began was just the second he had anticipated for himself.

It required only a few seconds to get all of this clear in his mind. Besides, he had gone over the job very minutely several times before he had attempted it, and while he had not expected such a surprise party, he had equipped himself for one by being thoroughly familiar with the "lay." Quite naturally he had fixed in his mind the exact position of every piece of furniture in the office, and when he had slipped from the position in which the officers' lights had caught him, it was to dodge in such a way as to place the great out-swung iron door of the safe between himself and the bullets.

From his strained, buckled posture behind the door he rolled over a distance of

four feet to stop himself beneath a long accounting-table. The tumbling trick was performed in much the same fashion as a football player is taught to roll when striking the ground, and when Westman, striking the table legs, halted he came to his hands and knees and crawled the length of the table. Reaching the far end, he thus placed himself almost within a line of the officers, and feeling his way he brought his feet up under his body. One of the detectives between him and the open door was firing point-blank over Westman's head. Here Westman hesitated a moment to settle upon the best possible move he could make. This man must be passed, and when he came up from under the table he took one second to brace himself and then, hurling his body like a well-trained football player, he dove straight into the detective's legs, sending him crashing to the floor. Westman struck him in such a way as to call for more tumbling, and he rolled in such a fashion as to bring himself almost within a step of the door. Leaping to his feet, he dashed from the office and was gone.

All of this happened in less than fifteen seconds; Westman was just that flashy and just that deliberate in all of his undertakings. He seldom failed to accomplish that which he purposed. Being free, he sped on, leaving behind him a babble of confusion. He heard oaths mingled with rapid commands and knew that the officers would be fast on his trail. One time he thought he heard a groan above the noise—he hoped the "dick" had not been hurt. Westman never harmed, and no shot ever left his gun unless it was his or the other's life. Back in the office he did not shoot because in the dark room he had had the advantage. Even in his flight he thought of this and was glad that he had not forced his automatic into action. As he thought of the weapon he remembered it was still in his hand, and he dropped it into his coat pocket and redoubled his speed.

Racing along the length of the store between counters piled high with merchandise, he came to a set of spiral stairs, and up these he dashed until he came to a ladder leading up to a sky-hole and the roof. Swinging himself up, he had hardly elbowed his way through the small opening to the roof before the officers were heard clambering up the last steps of the stairs. He clamped the lid over the hole just in time to stop a fusillade of lead from below.

Then in the blackness upon the roof, with only the stars to witness him, Westman did just what he wasn't expected to do—but that was the manner in which he worked. He could easily have drawn his automatic and stood there at the opening and picked each man off as his head appeared. Westman thought of it, but he wasn't after killing—he wanted the ten thousand in that safe; that was all.

On the flat roof he scudded over to where a skylight stood up above the roof and flung himself flat behind it. And in this position, peeping around a corner, he watched the detectives scramble up and onto the roof. He could not resist chuckling as he saw them rushing blindly here and yonder for the nearest walls, dropping to adjoining roofs. He counted the officers—three in all. Then one must have been left below; probably it was the man he had thrown. He hoped not.

Westman waited behind the screen until the detectives were scattered and removed from close observation, and then he crawled back to the roof-hole and dropped himself down the ladder.

He made straight back for the office. The room was thick with the odor of burnt powder and an intense stillness hovered in the heavy gloom. He trained his flash through the door and, blinking the eye off and on, searched the place. After shedding the circle of light over the floor to satisfy himself that the one missing officer was not there, he turned it off and tiptoed softly over the thick carpet and found the safe. Without again bringing his light into play he ran a hand into the money compartment and secured the remainder of the cash, which he placed in his pocket with the other stacks of bills. He then vacated the office.

This time upon leaving he did not run, but walked hastily through the aisles of the great store to the spiral staircase. Instead of climbing upward, he descended six floors

to the ground and walked hurriedly toward the front entrance of the establishment. It was not his original plan to let himself out this way, but he couldn't make it on the roof, so was taking a chance. Reaching the door, he placed a hand upon the latch and then stopped stock still in his tracks. The shadow of two men fell across the curtained sash and almost at the same time a flashlight reflected through the opening. It played on the glass for a short interval and Westman fell back into the dimness of the wall just as the door was swung open.

CHAPTER THREE

TWO men, one a policeman in uniform and the other a detective, entered, and Westman slipped down behind the counter near which he found himself standing. He bent an ear and listened without daring to scarcely breathe. One of the men was speaking, and he recognized him as Sergeant Starnes.

"LeCraw," he said hoarsely, "the man's still in or around this building. I have already blocked his escape from the city should he leave here, but you stick by the door. He may try it." With this the officer left and made toward the rear of the store, and soon Westman heard him mount the stairs and knew that he was climbing to join his men on the roof.

Minutes—long, painful minutes—passed. They were flashes of time that seemed to Westman, crouching there behind the simple barricade, like ages. But a few steps away was he from where the officer stood on guard, and he, dreading momentary discovery, feared even to breathe.

Then suddenly he found himself struggling to muffle a cough—that cough! Heaven help him! He jerked his handkerchief from his pocket and in desperation stuffed it into his mouth and clenched his teeth. Should the gnawing in his chest continue he would die. Would it never stop?

His efforts were useless, and the choking gasp followed.

One, two, three times he emitted those muffled, gagging sounds—sounds that, in the quiet building, were like the beating of a drum. Then silence—silence like a thousand years—followed, and the fugitive, shaking with icy beads of sweat on his brow, listened.

His trained ear finally caught an unmistakable sound—a sickening sound. It was the jingle of metal—a strange sound that he had heard before, and it could mean but one thing, for there was no other sound like it. He knew that the officer had drawn his revolver—the sound, that of the gun scratching against a cartridge belt, told Westman this.

After this he heard a sharp click—another inimitable sound. He recognized it as the snap made by the drawing back of the hammer of a pistol. Then there followed more deep silence and Westman moved not a muscle.

In a few seconds he heard a very slight shift of shoe leather against the bare floor, and the fugitive's instinct told him that the officer was beginning to reconnoiter, but even then he dared not chance a peep around the corner to ascertain the direction in which the bluecoat was moving. Nevertheless, Westman did not intend to be caught like a trapped animal, and he gambled his life on one move.

Inch by inch he began sliding his way along the shelves. Every few feet he came to a dead stop, and each time waited with bated breath to catch the faintest sign or sound that might convey to him some hint of the officer's position. Still there was nothing but the shifting of soft-soled feet, growing nearer and more distinct with each move. Westman was certain that the officer was traveling in his direction and he feared almost any moment the exposing glare of a flashlight, or perhaps the terrible sting of a bullet.

In his present fix he even wondered which of the two he would prefer to have happen. The bullet would mean the end of it all, and there would be no aftermath for him; the light would mean both, or perhaps just his arrest—cold, cruel capture, which would inevitably be followed by another prison term.

He believed, as he trembled, kneeling there on the musty floor, that he would rather be shot down like a dog than to return to that horrible place of confinement. How he hated the thought!

Then, as if fleeing from its menacing grasp, he inched his way on with actual fear in his heart—fear like he had never known before. Perhaps it was the slow, calculated moves of the officer that drove him; perhaps it was the absence of his real self, but he seemed unable to fully recover —his nerves were gone.

Reaching a new section of the counters, he stopped, for he had heard a new sound. Something unexpected was happening—something that seemed to indicate another fighting chance for him. The sound that he heard was that of running feet, and he held himself motionless to lend an eager, hopeful ear.

There were many feet racing along. At first they sounded faint and far away, but gradually they grew very much plainer and louder.

Thump, thump, thump!

Down steps they came and then he heard breathless voices. Then, so very near him that he felt the rush of wind, several men ran along the aisle so close to Westman that he could have stuck out his foot and tripped one of them. The men stopped at the door, and Westman heard several sharp commands, some indistinct and others louder. One he caught very clearly:

"Surround the block!"

There were other orders and quick words from the group of officers. It was impossible to catch everything, but now and then Westman picked up a word.

"South—alley—roof—door—shot—back."

He put them together himself. The words meant nothing more than the officers on the roof had discovered a man in an alley far below, and it was evident that he had just left a building through a door and was traveling south. Westman wasn't sure that his deductions were right; the officers might have planned a trap. But it was one chance, and the straw that he needed, and he grabbed for it.

CHAPTER FOUR

WESTMAN waited until he heard the door of the main entrance latched, then, leaving his position behind the counter, he fairly flew along the aisle of the store to the stairs and, taking them two at a time, he quickly reached the top, made the ladder and then the roof.

The place was deserted and he immediately sought his already planned means of escape. Across two sets of walls, drops of ten feet each, then a short leap upward over another ledge and from there to the rear coping of the metal roof he went. He dropped to his hands and knees, caught the edge and swung himself over. For a space of several seconds he hung there, high above the ground, swinging like a clock pendulum.

It was a perilous swing downward, but Westman knew his ground and as he steadied his body he let go his grip on the metal guttering and dropped to the iron fire-escape directly beneath.

He now stood five stories from the ground and, leaning over the railing of the escape, he exerted his sight to, if possible, determine what was going on below. At first he could see nothing, but as his vision grew accustomed to the gloom beneath and he could penetrate the darkness he thought he caught, in the lea of a building, the movement of the figure of a man. He watched the dull outline of the human form for several minutes and then it seemed to have vanished. He decided to risk a slow decent of the fire-escape, and traveling with the stealth of an animal he at length reached the lowest platform and here came to a sudden halt.

Soft movements on the ground directly below him had caused him to come to an abrupt stop and, crouching low, he peered between the bars of the iron balustrade. He beheld a man so very near him that he could have dropped easily upon his shoulders, and while he followed his movements he even contemplated this bit of strategy. But before he could think of putting his thoughts into action something else happened. Like a streak of lightning in the

darkness the thin beam of a flash broke out and Westman fell back to a corner. He expected almost any instant that the circle of light would climb the wall of the building and encircle his huddled form. He drew himself back and crouched there, dreading every second. The light was directed in every possible nook and cranny of the alley, but for some unknown reason the man below never thought of training it up and along the walls of the building. At length he cut the light off, and when he did this the fugitive responded to the opportunity and, crawling, groped his way back up the steps of the escape.

Reaching the third-story landing, he tried a window that opened there and found that it gave. Quickly he lifted it, dropped inside and lowered the sash behind him. Inside, the room was black and still, and Westman dared to turn on his own pocket light to find his way about. One quick glance told him that he had entered the finishing-room of a photographer's studio, and his keen judgment assured him somewhere in the front he would most surely find a door that would lead to the hall and that this passageway would take him to a street entrance. Once in the open he had little fear of capture—he was confident that he could make good his getaway; certainly the officers could not have blocked every imaginable means of escape. There were a dozen or more avenues that he knew of.

So, following in the path of the light from his flashlight, he wound his way through the tunnel-like ways leading from the finishing-room to the dark-room of the studio, and from there to the gallery and thence to the main reception parlor. Here he snapped off his light, for he had discovered a long, glass-paneled door—the only remaining obstruction that stood between him and the hallway outside. He knew that he could, if necessary, remove the glass; but perhaps the latch would release from the inside.

He moved softly over to the door and tried it. The door gave and he stepped out into the hall and closed the door behind him. Then, pressing close to the wall, he followed its course until it brought him to the head of the stairs leading down to the street. Still hugging the wall, he crept down the two flights until he came abruptly to the street, and here brought himself to a sharp and breathless stop.

Voices—those of the officers—sounded close by him. Steadying his nerves, Westman stood back in the shadows and listened. At first their words were indistinguishable; he could hear nothing but the low mumbling. But as his ears became trained to the modulation of the speakers he was able to catch a word now and then. He recognized the sergeant heading the detail speaking.

"—believe—cough—heard—our man—anyhow — gone — every light — building searched — couldn't hide — fake alarm — you'd have caught——"

CHAPTER FIVE

THE hoarse whispering grew faint and the hiding man, sensing that the men were moving away, chanced to look around the frame of the door. He was correct. The broad backs of the detective-sergeant and the uniformed officer were to him as they moved toward the main entrance of the department store.

Westman sighed with relief. The few scattered words which he had caught indicated to him the sergeant was expressing the belief that the officer on duty at the door in the store had not been mistaken in hearing the cough, and that they had received a false alarm from the alley below.

Westman chuckled to himself and gambled another peep from his place of concealment. The officers were still walking along, but the sight of them did not attract him so much as did the fact that a large automobile was approaching rapidly from their direction. His eyes gave the almost-deserted street a sweeping glance, and, assured that he was not to be observed, he set himself—it was a chance in a thousand to come to him in such a predicament—and as the machine purred by his hiding-place he dashed out and swung himself easily up onto the tire rack at the rear of the car.

He did not adjust himself for a lengthy stay in this position, for he fully realized he could not hazard himself thus long. The car, he knew, must pass corners and police officers would be on duty and would most surely not permit him to go by. Nevertheless he was thankful for an opportunity to place even such a short distance as two or three blocks between himself and the officers back at the store.

He chanced the machine for three blocks, and as the car swept around a corner he slid unnoticed to the pavement and turned down the street. Muffling the annoying cough with his handkerchief and casting suspicious eyes in every direction of the empty thoroughfares, he hurried on. Once free, his course was unwavered.

He walked rapidly on for four blocks, turned left and went to the third square and there made a right turn. He traveled this street two blocks, then crossed, and darted around a corner to come up in front of a hotel. He stopped and signaled to the uniformed taxi starter for a cab.

He cursed his luck for being so feeble that a taxi was necessary; he hated them, and the drivers were so suspicious and always questioned so closely by the police. But he must have a vehicle. He noted with much satisfaction that the driver of this one was particularly sleepy-eyed and scarcely gave him a respectable glance. He received his direction to drive to the Terminal Station with a deep grunt, threw the car into gear and whirled off.

Westman decided suddenly that he would not chance the driver to the Terminal, for he was reminded that there would be officers on duty at the entrance, and it being evident that a city-wide warning had been broadcasted to look out for him, he would be picked up. So, leaning forward, he tapped on the glass front and gave other orders—orders that would place him within two blocks of the station.

In fifteen minutes the cab drew up to the curb and he stepped out, paid his fare, with a generous tip for the driver, and left. His course was a roundabout one leading to the train station and taken for the purpose of avoiding the front entrance and the several officers he knew to be there.

By this winding route, which took him through several shops and a restaurant, he came out in the crowded waiting-room and then sought the ticket window, where he fell into place in the long line of waiting passengers. After having purchased a ticket to New York City, he went to the marble counter between the two blue-lettered globes that signified the telegraph station and there gathered up a handful of blanks. With these he seated himself on a well-crowded bench.

He never wanted seclusion—safety in a crowd was one of his working mottoes. Then Westman wrote a letter. When he had filled the several sheets with lines from his pencil he folded them, fished from an inner pocket an envelope and into it fitted the telegraph blanks. He addressed the envelope, sealed down the flap and left his seat to go over to a stamp-vending machine where he secured the postage. He posted the letter in the mail slot near.

After this was done he left the railroad station by somewhat the same route which he had entered; outside, he walked a few blocks' distance and signaled a passing taxi and gave orders to the driver that would take him to within a few blocks of another train station, then he got into the cab. Inside the tonneau he took from his pockets the several stacks of bills, carefully counted them and whistled softly.

CHAPTER SIX

"TEN thousand," Westman muttered. For a moment he fingered the bills thoughtfully, then, pulling back the lining of his coat, found a slit and dropped the bills into it. This done, he drew out the New York railroad ticket he had purchased and reduced it to tiny bits and these, a few at a time, he threw from the window of the cab until the rushing winds had swept them into oblivion.

The driver had been pushing his machine, and before Westman realized it the cab

had slid up to the curb. Alighting, he slipped the driver a dollar bill and, without bothering for change, left and hurried in the direction of the train station.

Again he dodged the waiting officers and reached the main waiting-room. He did not approach the ticket window, but sought, by a remote course, the baggage-room and followed the line of trunks, piled high, to the train platform.

Here he let luck guide him and grabbed the first passenger leaving the long shed. He found himself entering a day coach filled with travelers bearing the marks of a long, weary journey. Almost every living soul in the car dozed restlessly, and Westman could locate but one vacant seat; this he gave a cautious glance. He didn't like it—something told him that the seat should not be vacant. He glanced around with the hope of finding a more inviting one, but each seat was in use as a make-shift lounge and he did not care to arouse one of the sleeping passengers. His eyes came back to the one empty section and for a moment he stood there and studied it uncertainly. The traveler in the space just ahead of the vacant one was a man apparently of sixty or more with a gray, bewhiskered face. He appeared to be dozing soundly. The man behind the empty space was hunched up with his face buried under a black derby hat. He didn't like his outward appearance and he turned as if to leave the car. The fellow under the hat stirred perceptibly and Westman whirled around, but the man seemed sleeping soundly enough and, feeling that his suspicions were groundless and that he must now be safely on his journey from the city, Westman fell limply into the vacant space. He was tired and ill and needed rest; nevertheless he did not relax, but let his right hand find its way to the butt of his automatic. As he did this he heard the man behind squirm in his seat and he slipped the gun out.

Presently he felt a touch on his shoulder. He did not turn around, but tightened his grip on the automatic and braced himself for rapid action.

Several seconds elapsed and the man behind Westman touched him again—impatiently touched him and at the same time tightened his fingers on his shoulders. With this Westman half turned his head and, out of the corner of his eye, looked back.

What he beheld made his blood almost freeze and the cold perspiration to ooze through his skin; he gazed down the dark and ugly barrel of a heavy Colt. Speech at this instant was impossible, but as Westman's eyes traveled up the barrel of the gun and became fixed for a brief instant upon the man's face his mind worked.

"Get 'em up, Westman!" was the cool command that came from the officer as Westman's eyes met an overpowering stare. But even this, with the command, failed to bring a move from the fugitive; it merely stampeded his thoughts for a few seconds. He had to attempt escape if it meant his life, and he was turning over in his mind a move. And then, as he suddenly conceived his plan of action, he did not hesitate.

Plunging down from the range of the gun, he slid to the floor and came up from the aisle by the old man in the seat ahead. At the same time the detective, for a second thrown off his guard, flung himself into the aisle in a wild effort to grab the escaping man, but his action was a shade too slow.

The dozing old man was literally swept up from his seat and thrown in the aisle, and before the old fellow was awakened enough to realize what was happening Westman had pinned his arms behind him and, using him as a screen, was backing down the length of the car. The automatic he leveled under the old man's arm, holding the detective helpless.

Not a single word was uttered by either the officer or Westman until the former, grasping the situation, found his voice and vociferated his mind.

"Catch that man!"

He bawled the order out several times, but before the drowsy passengers could be aroused to the true significance of what was taking place the fleeing man had reached the vestibule, lifted the trap, and, after giving the old man a forward push back into the door of the car, leaped from the speeding train.

Striking the ground, he fell, turned over several times to regain his feet, then he wheeled and fled in the direction from which the train had come.

The crack of a pistol some distance behind caused him to duck low, but he felt no bullet sting and raced on. At length he chanced to glance over his shoulder; the only visible sign of the train left was a pair of tiny red eyes far down the rail and soon they vanished in the gloom.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AS he watched the final signs of the train vanish into the night Westman caught another sight that spurred him to redouble his efforts for greater speed. It was the cutting gleam of a flashlight encircling the darkness that drove him on and told him that the officer had also leaped from the train and was giving chase.

Darting between stationary cars, jumping across rails and switches, he soon lost himself in the tangle of tracks and rows of parked coaches, and in another five minutes he came in sight of the long, low train-shed, whereupon he decided that his next best move was to attempt another train.

Having evaded the officer, he slowed down and approached the station at a walk. Reaching the high cement walk-ways between the tracks, he met another passenger which was rumbling its way on an outward course, and he swung to the steps of the last car.

Then, as though he had been knocked off by a lick on the head, he fell backward. A man standing on the top step of the platform made a quick movement with his hand to his side pocket and Westman caught the glint of steel. He lit on the pavement rolling, but came swiftly to his feet just as the man on the moving train tumbled off after him, firing his revolver. The shots went high and wild and Westman, observing the open door of a baggage-car, scrambled through and jumped to the cement walk on the opposite side.

As he struck the walk he heard clamorous commands issued from the other side of the car and, reasoning that the officer had secured assistance, he fairly flew along the walk. Glancing back over his shoulder, he saw several men scurrying from this and that direction and there was then raised a hue and cry from the pressing mob. Hoarse cries were mingled with wild shrieks as the men yelled:

"Catch that man!"

Westman was growing painfully weak and his lungs ached and burned; he felt that he could not last much longer. The din behind was drawing nearer and he was fully conscious of the fact that unless something came to swallow him up, as it were, from vision he would be forced to drop in his tracks, or turn and fight—shoot to kill.

God! He hated the thought. No, he would force himself to the utmost—something would come. A hiding place—if he could only find a haven somewhere—any place just to rest his miserable body for a few short moments.

His legs were beginning to turn numb and his breath came in hard, terrible gasps, and he could see that he was losing ground. He took another glance over his shoulder; there was now a regular army of pursuers behind him and they were closing in upon him.

He had just hopped from the cement walk to the cinders between the tracks out in the railroad yards when luck, in the form of a long passenger train roaring into the station, turned his way. It was chance good fortune only to the extent of Westman's own boldness. As the engine and the first three cars rumbled past him he turned, swung beneath a coach and, grabbing at a brake-beam, pulled himself upon it.

It was all so quick and so unexpected that the first line of pursuers lost him from sight entirely. They were thrown completely off the track, and as a result led the followers in the chase on out into the yards of the railroad hunting the fugitive, who was now scrambling from under the passenger.

Westman, choosing his time, waited until the travelers began alighting, and then

joined the thick of the crowd that was moving toward the main exit. He did not hope to gain his escape by this trick, for he had come to realize that all possible chance of leaving the city by rail had been successfully blocked by the headquarters detectives. Sergeant Starnes had acted promptly. Westman reflected upon this as he moved along with the hurrying throng and told himself that by this time the train station would be completely surrounded by officers on duty for none other than the expressed purpose of laying their hands upon his shoulders.

Having walked with the crowd as far as he dared, he slipped behind a moving mail truck and, using it as a screen and at the same time assuming the attitude of an attendant, he trotted with the vehicle. If any one paid him attention thus, with a hand resting upon a valuable pouch, he was put down as a busy mail transfer clerk hurrying along with his duties.

Fortunately for Westman, the man operating the truck was hidden from vision by the great pile of sacks, and when at length the truck nosed its way through a long tunnel it came up in the vast underground workings of a railroad station. Here, in this human beehive of activity, Westman left the vehicle and wound his own way through the scores of laboring men who, intent upon their tasks, were too busy scurrying in a dozen different directions to pay him heed. He picked up the pace of these men and, by a somewhat uncertain course, worked his way to the baggage-room and then to the express office of the station. Here he found himself in still busier quarters. Men were sweating behind heavy push-trucks, others, with books and pads, were checking goods and shouting their notations, and others, apparently with nothing more to do, were merely running from place to place as if to kill time.

Threading his way in and out among the men and the mountainous piles of boxes, packages and truckage, he at last came to the open air. He found himself on a platform used for loading out the express and where several huge trucks were backed up to the station.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE platform itself swarmed with men who, under the heat of orders and pressure of time, were laboring. In and out the various doors leading to the platform they raced with their burdens, which were tossed into the bodies of the motor trucks that were panting to start with their freight.

One monstrous truck was loaded and the driver was climbing to the seat at the wheel when Westman, gambling on an avenue of escape, leaped up beside him.

"How about a lift, buddy?" he yelled so as to be heard above the noise.

The driver gave him a quizzical and half-contemptuous look from the corners of his eyes. At the same time some one back on the platform screamed "All on!" and for a moment the driver was engaged. He shot the machine into gear and sent it away from its port and then took a second to pay attention to his extra passenger.

"Get out!" he yelled; "'gainst rules!"

Westman made a move for his pocket and produced a half-dollar.

"Got to get to a place quick!" he shouted. "You go near it. Here"—he pushed the coin under the driver's nose—"take it."

With suspicion in his eyes, the driver took them from the street a moment to bestow a curious glance on the coin. He then shot Westman a look of appraisal. The urgent plea that showed in the latter's eyes must have prompted him to jeopardize his job by violating the rules.

"Keep your money, bo. I'll ride you." His consent was a grumbling one and complete silence followed, while the massive truck crawled its way along a narrow driveway to emerge into a dingy back-street and gain speed with the quick shifting of the gears.

Their course was back-ways and circuitous and to Westman their destination a deep mystery. He half-wondered where they were going, but then it didn't matter, for he would leave the machine before it reached its homing place. He was so thankful for the brief season of rest afforded him by the ride that he little cared where

this wind of good fortune swept him. It had been demonstrated that he could have no chance of escape by rail unless it would be a fast freight and a decision to reserve this for the last was reached.

While he sat there bouncing in his seat with the motion of the truck he took time to reflect upon his situation and form in his mind a new step. He had one other means open to get away, a way which he had held back for just such a climax as this. He was on intimate terms with the owner of a high-powered automobile, and the owner not being above a shady deal for a large piece of money, Westman knew he could get action here for one of the hundred-dollar bills he held.

Still turning the move over in his mind, he abided his time until the truck, rumbling, nosed its way into a narrow back-street not far from one of the city's principal thoroughfares. He bid the driver a grateful farewell, leaped to the ground, and ducking into the shadows of the irregular line of brick buildings that faced the street he found his way to a corner. Turning it, he came in sight of the brightly lighted front of a cheap, all-night restaurant, and this he entered A toll telephone stood out prominently on the wall at the rear of the establishment and he went to it. A coin was dropped into the slot and a number given the operator.

"Jake," Westman said in a low voice, "this is an old pal in trouble——Yes, Westman. I need you and your car. Will a hundred turn the trick?——Five minutes? Good boy!"

After giving directions, Westman clicked the receiver to its hook and turned to the white-enamel counter, where he perched himself on one of the stools. A swarthy young Greek came up.

"Coffee, ham sandwich, peach pie," he ordered; "make it quick, Charley, I've got a train to catch."

The attendant hustled away and in short time came back with the steaming coffee and the food, and with a watchful eye on the main entrance of the café Westman sipped his coffee and swallowed the sandwich. He had scarcely finished the last bite of pie when he was startled to action by the scream of an automobile's brake. He threw a half-dollar—the one the truck driver had refused—to the Greek and dashed for the flapping screen doors of the café, and almost at the same time a long, heavy car swerved to the curb in front of the white-fronted establishment.

In one bound the fugitive reached the running-board of the machine and the driver stepped on the gas. As the car he was in swept away from the curb Westman heard the roar of an exhaust from a huge motor somewhere behind. Letting himself into the seat by the driver, he looked back and saw a long, low car nose its way rapidly around the corner and from its side a slender streak of fire spurt, to be followed by the crack of a pistol. He ducked lower into his seat and listened to several other shots that were accompanied with the singing of lead above his head. He touched the driver on the sleeve.

"Jake," he shouted, "can this boat run?"

"Can she? Watch her." And with the words no more than out of his mouth the driver set his toe on the accelerator. The machine lurched forward and stretched itself quickly out into full speed.

"Where to, Swifty?" Jake shouted.

"Get me out of town," was Westman's answer.

CHAPTER NINE

WHEREUPON the driver hunched himself down behind the wheel and set himself for the critical test of nerve and speed. The machine responded to his touch and gathered speed with every turn of the motor. It skidded around a corner and Westman took a quick look back. To add to his troubled nerves, he beheld that the dark car was holding its own, and even as he looked another streak of fire, followed by a muffled explosion from the tonneau, startled him. This shot was only the forerunner of a regular volley, for in another instant, and as the machine bearing Westman presented a broadside to the car be-

hind, the air resounded with the echo of barking pistols. Suddenly Westman winced and his left hand went to his right shoulder.

"God, Jake," he groaned, "I'm winged! Give her everything she's got." More shots thundered out from behind. "Swing by 1945 East A Street," continued Westman, "and if the cops are not too close I'll leave you there."

The driver heard and nodded, at the same time forcing the car to take another corner at a perilous speed.

"Can't make it!" shouted Jake; "but listen!" Westman leaned over to catch what was to be said.

"Twelve blocks east," went on Jake, "I know an alley." He negotiated another dangerous curve. "An alley"—he picked up his words as the corner was rounded—"you drop off there"—another corner was made —"follow alley to the next street." Jake took another curve at fifty per hour, and a straight course for six blocks lay ahead. "If we can make this stretch"—he went on —"before they reach the corner. Follow the alley to next street; cross underpass; take alley and you'll come out in rear of 1945." The machine flipped around the last corner.

"Not in sight," Westman muttered. "Thanks, Jake. Here's the money. Good-by."

The car slid before the gloomy alley and Westman, stumbling to the ground, slunk into the dungeon-like way between the buildings.

For fifteen seconds he held himself, panting, close to the wall. The thundering roar of the police motor reached his ears, and in another second the car flashed by the alley entrance hot in pursuit of Jake. With a painful effort Westman drove himself to scramble blindly on and follow the course of the walls of the back-way.

He reached its end, followed Jake's instructions and crossed the underpass and then took the alley to the left and came out at last in the rear of the building that he sought.

Looking up at its dull walls, he beheld a gleam of light coming from beneath a drawn shade in the third story, and he let his eyes follow the reflection of the faint light to trace out the lines of a fire-escape leading to within a floor of the ground. His wound was burning him to such an extent that the pain was torture, but he could not resist grunting his satisfaction. If it came to a pinch he could drop down the escape.

After this he went around to enter the front of a rather pretentious apartment-house, where, in the lobby, he aroused the dozing elevator boy and requested to be shot up to the third floor. The attendant gave Westman a sleepy look of disapproval, but obeyed.

Following the course of the hall, Westman found the number he was seeking, and hurriedly pushed the bell button. With a sigh of relief he listened to the soft tinkling of the bell hidden somewhere in the walls of the rooms.

CHAPTER TEN

SILENCE, painful and nerve-racking followed. Westman, weak from his wound and weary from his trying season of exertion, leaned heavily against the door-frame and waited.

A torturing cough came over him and he shook himself to avoid a spasm. He was just pulling himself together when the door creaked to give out a beam of light from within and reveal a woman's face in the opening.

"Kate!" he whispered; "hide me quick, Kate!"

Following his plea, he pressed his body through the opening and slammed the door behind him.

Katherine Havenwood staggered back and a slender hand clutched at her pretty white throat. She instinctively drew the silken wrap she wore closer about her and almost shrank from the man.

"David!" she gasped, "where——"

She could say no more. All of the past flashed vividly before her, and things, as though she were awakening from a long, unpleasant dream, came back to her.

Westman started to speak and the woman held up her hand. She was engulfed in

thoughts—thoughts of other days—trying to bring herself to a realization of an incomprehensible situation.

David Westman—her David—stood staggering and helpless before her. She could not move; she, Katherine Havenwood—whose name flickered upon the electric boards of theatres everywhere; whose alluring manner, whose captivating charms held thousands at her feet—was paralyzed with something akin to fear. It was a perception of what could have occurred.

She stood there trembling, with her eyes transfixed upon the bleeding man who was sinking down before her, and as she did she beheld other days—days when she was nought; days when her pitiful efforts at success were likened unto the singing of the nightingale in a thunder-storm; they were days when David Westman, with his money and his mysterious influence, had pushed her forward to the goal she desired to attain. She choked back a sob. David, to whom she owed everything—David, whom she had loved like no other; the David who had turned that love into scorn and contempt when he was sentenced to prison—that David stood before her there in her apartment. It was more than possible to imagine.

She turned her face from him and dropped to the divan. Then she thought. He had said something—what was it? Oh, yes. Hide him! She turned her eyes up.

"What!" she shuddered.

"Hide me, Kate!" Westman's eyes revealed the pain he was suffering, and there was a note of exasperated impatience in his voice. "Hide me, girl; I'm shot!" he pleaded.

"David!" She made a move upward and then shrank back. "Heavens!" she whispered, as her hand went to her lips. "You—you——"

"I'm sick, Kate," he murmured, reading her thoughts. "I'm sorry, girl——"

"Sick?" she repeated under her breath. Her chin was quivering. "Sick—you mean——"

"Yes; I took consumption at the prison."

"David——" Sobs broke the words that might have followed, and the woman crumpled to the lounge. For several seconds she wept without daring to lift her face, and when at last she composed herself she would not let her eyes meet those of the man who stood there behind her clutching at his shattered arm and leaning against the door frame. Her voice was calm and she spoke barely above a whisper:

"David, I hated you for your weakness, when—when you were found guilty. I thought you were a man. I loved you—loved you more than mere words could say. You couldn't have loved me, David, and done that——"

"Oh, Kate," Westman interrupted, "you don't understand—you don't know——"

The woman started to speak.

"Hush!" he commanded, "listen. You must help me. I'm shot. Get a physician here. You have friends. Get one here somehow. You must hide me until the officers have come and gone. Quick! There's not a second to lose!" Westman took a step toward her and she fell away.

"What have you done now!" she cried, her lips trembling.

"Don't ask me now—I wrote you——"

Westman caught himself with an intake of breath.

"The letter," he whispered, "the letter. Kate—the letter."

"What letter?"

"I wrote you—you couldn't have received it. They'll stop it. I shouldn't have written, but I wanted you to know. They'll come. Kate, I haven't a chance——"

The doorbell tinkled.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"THEY are there!" Westman breathed painfully. "The fire escape—good-by, Kate!" Already the pursued man was stumbling toward the rear of the apartment.

Reaching the kitchenette, he found the window facing the escape and threw up the sash. Dropping out, he partly slid and partly fell down the iron steps until he came to the final landing. The drop to the ground

was dangerous, especially for Westman with his injured arm, but he knew that he must chance it, so he let go. Striking the ground with a heavy thud, he pulled himself up to blink his eyes in the blinding rays of a flash.

"Got you, Westman!" came a cool command. "Put 'em up?"

This sudden turn of affairs was like a clap of thunder from a clear sky to the fleeing man. He could not move—he was paralyzed from the unexpectedness of the thing, and dully he heard the heavy order storm out again:

"Get 'em up, Westman; you're dead to rights!"

Weakly he lifted his left arm above his head, but, try as he could, the right arm would not respond to the upward motion.

"Up with the gun hand, Westman, up with it!"

The detective had halted in his command because the light he held in his hand went dead. Then there was a swift movement in the dark and a pistol barked its song of death.

One, two, three shots roared out and the flashes of ruby light which lit up the ground for brief seconds showed a form, trembling an instant as if anchored in mid air, sink to the ground.

Then in the gloom the dark figure of another man dropped to his knees over the body on the ground. Almost at the same time two other detectives came quickly from above, the head of another appearing in the lighted window.

The man on his knees spoke to the two who leaned down.

"He's still breathing, sergeant."

"Here," commanded the officer, "get him out to our car—maybe we can make it to the hospital."

And the limp form of Westman was borne to the machine, which only a few moments ago had been speeding to its limit to overtake him, and bundled into the tonneau. With the officers clinging to the running-board of the car, Westman was whirled, at the height of the motor's speed, to a hospital.

And then at the hospital, in the operating room speed, calm and certain, took charge of the situation and soon the nurses and surgeons closed the doors of the great white room and the officers were left waiting outside. Perhaps an hour passed before an attending surgeon appeared in the waiting-room. He shook his head gravely and spoke in a doubtful voice:

"There's one chance in a thousand—if the lung can heal."

Sergeant Starnes made a hopeless gesture. "He's got tuberculosis, doctor?"

The surgeon shook his head and went away.

CHAPTER TWELVE

IT was something like twelve hours later that Sergeant Starnes was at his desk in police headquarters. He had just seated himself when his eyes fell upon a double photograph pasted to a thin white card. He took it up and for a moment studied the two pictures of the same man—one a full front view and another a side take—with the number 9555 on the shoulder. The officer turned the card over and read over again the description of David Westman.

A faint smile moved the detective's countenance and he dropped the record card back to his desk. Then his eyes met the letter lying there unopened. The letter—he had nearly forgotten it. He read the address:

Miss Katherine Havenwood,
1945 East A Street,
City.

Sergeant Starnes then turned the envelope around and was about to break the seal when the buzzer on his desk sounded and he lifted the telephone.

"Yes?——Thanks, I'll be right over."

Replacing the receiver and stuffing the envelope in his pocket, Sergeant Starnes left his desk and the Headquarters. His course was directly to the hospital where, the night before, he had left Westman in a critical condition. He was greeted by an attendant who informed him as to the ward sought. Outside, in a passageway from the

wards, a nurse led him to the door of a special room and he was admitted.

The man on the cot opened his eyes and presented a feeble smile to the officer standing over him. Starnes reached down and took Westman's left hand in his right and gave it a rough squeeze.

"How are you, Swifty?" he asked.

"Not so much," he answered weakly. "I suppose I'm through, Sergeant."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," returned the officer with a spirit of lightness; "give yourself a chance, Westman." He hesitated. Then, "You sent for me?"

"Yes, to give you the money. It's all there except a hundred. I presume the company will have to stand that loss." Sergeant Starnes nodded and Westman went on: "Another thing, Sergeant. Tell me how you knew the job was to be pulled off. It doesn't matter now I'm through. I just wanted to know. Morbid curiosity prompts it, I suppose. Something told me, then everything pointed to it, that somewhere my plans miscarried."

Sergeant Starnes slipped down to the edge of the cot.

"Westman," he said, "luck was against you. When you got into that store during the rush before closing time, and concealed yourself behind those hanging rugs on the third floor, a clerk saw you. This same clerk watched for you to come out, and when you didn't he told his manager, and as a consequence I was notified. My instructions to the manager were to watch until I could get some men there. Later I went myself."

Westman moved with a great sigh.

"You certainly had the town set against me," he said. "I finally saw there wasn't a chance, and when your man, down there behind her apartment, held me things took a strange turn. If that flash hadn't gone bad I wouldn't be here now." He sighed again and turned his face to the wall. "Like a fool, I drew on him in the dark with my left hand." He hesitated for a second, then, "I presume you got that letter. Another fool trick for me to do—shouldn't have written her—might have known she didn't care. Whatever happens, Sergeant, don't drag her name into this. She's a good woman.

"But the letter—read it, sergeant—maybe you'll understand something about me." He ended, catching his breath and suppressing a groan of anguish for the pain in his lungs. Then, "Ask for my coat," he said, "and in the lining you'll find the money. Burn that letter, Sergeant, if you don't need it. Good-by!"

The officer arose and left the room. Back at his desk in detective headquarters he opened the letter and read:

"DEAR GIRL: Now I dare to write you. At last I am free—free, but still a prisoner. That place! Oh, the torment—the torture my soul has suffered! Heaven will never let me forget! But even with the knowledge I would gladly go through it again for you—to know that you are what you are.

"Somewhere, some time—it seems ages ago—I read these lines:

"'Oh happiness! Our being's end and aim!
Good, pleasure, ease, content! Whate'er thy name—
That something still which prompts the eternal sigh,
For which we bear to live or dare to die!'

"Sounds like Pope, but my muddled brain beclouds my memory. I know now, girl, what that elusive something is that drives man to the worst.

"It wasn't the prison that reformed me—no! No! God in Heaven forbid! If ever I shall think of hell again it will be with an association of that terrible place.

"I think that it must be this cough and what the physician at the prison told me—he said I wasn't good for more than a year. He advised that if I could reach a mountain of the South or West and give nature a chance to heal my torn lungs, I perhaps would have a chance. It's not a cheerful feeling to know one is apt to die! I don't think I shall have it. But I'm down to dust-level, and from tonight on I hit the straight and narrow way. My exact destination is not certain—even if it were I would not tell

you, for I must go and grow well before I must let you see me. And then everything must be repaid. I'm sorry that I deceived you with my wealth—you know now it was dishonest, but—I will pay all somehow. Tonight I committed my last dishonest act—I robbed, but it is a means to an end. And that end is my health, so that I can earn honestly and pay back dollar for dollar.

"When I come back to you, dear girl, I may be a poor man, but an honest one. I am sure that I will make it somehow. I must do it—I must save myself.

"Forgive me for not letting you help, but I'm still a man in soul if not in body.

"Goodby, DAVID."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SOME weeks later David Westman, escorted by a court deputy, entered the great, high-ceilinged hall—that inner chamber of the Temple of Justice.

It was with stooped shoulders and a lagging step that he had wound his way along the resounding corridors of the spacious marble courthouse, but when he appeared before the bar he met a situation far beyond his immediate comprehension and instantly felt a keener interest in his welfare.

The soft-voiced man, the Judge—gray with years of service—was speaking. Westman lifted his head and permitted his eyes to meet those of the magistrate.

"——and having received your plea of guilty," the Judge was saying, "and in view of the circumstances surrounding your case, your illness in particular, for in your condition you would be of no service to the state, I pass sentence upon you."

There was a moment of tense stillness as the Court hesitated. Then,

"Five years with this suspended pending your good conduct. You are a free man in only so far as the Court sees fit to allow. Remember that this sentence is only held up, and the least intention on your part to violate the law will be considered by this Court as a fracture of its trust."

Westman's lips moved to form some word, but his voice failed him and all that he could do was to find his way from the courtroom.

Outside in the corridor some one touched him on the arm and he turned to look at an envelope extended toward him by a uniformed messenger boy. He took the message and signed a scrawl to the slip of paper, then he left the building.

Not far away he turned into the shrubbery-bordered walk of a park and sank weakly down upon the first bench he came to. For a full minute he stared at the envelope bearing upon its face his name. The stationery, the script and the faint odor of exquisite perfume were all too familiar. Somehow he sensed her—had felt her nearness in the procedure back at the courthouse. He turned the envelope over and with eyes heavy with dull figures of things of the past—as though they were from a dream—he unsealed the flap and took out the sheet of paper.

A long strip of green printed paper fell to the ground and he gathered it up.

A railroad ticket. Quickly he opened the letter and read:

"DEAREST DAVID: Yes, I could have concealed you that night. And a thousand times I have begged Heaven's curse upon me for my indifference. But maybe it was for the best. I am unhappy, David; unhappy as only a woman who loves and who realizes that her love is rightfully scorned can be. I cannot blame you for despising me—a pettish, selfish little fool. I do not ask you to forget, but plead for your forgiveness.

"Today, David, you will be free—free to go without that terrible dread of something seeking, dogging you. To advise is futile—to act, to do, is paramount. I have arranged with a sanitarium in the mountains in the South for everything. David, let me brush some of the webs from my own conscience; go there and try hard to become your one-time well self. Give yourself one chance—one more chance. Take this ticket and leave tonight. Good-by, David."

Having finished reading the letter, Westman went over it again, and then sat for a long time with his eyes fixed upon it. He turned the ticket over in his fingers thoughtfully, and at length folded it and placed it in his pocket. The letter was then carefully put away in an inner pocket and he arose from the bench and left the park with a purpose in view.

Six hours later a Southbound passenger train was speeding on its journey with Westman a passenger, and almost at the same moment Katherine Havenwood was reading the few short words on a postal, scrawled there in haste by the man of her heart.

"Kate, you are too splendid! Gratefully,
"YOUR DAVID."

"David—David, the indomitable—dear old David," the woman murmured as she carefully deposited the message in a place among keepsakes.

ASTROLOGER GUIDED THE CRIMINAL

PLANS for the slaying of wealthy residents of Coos County with their families were laid by Arthur Covell, 47 years old, a cripple, known as an astrologer, according to the confession he is said to have made to authorities at Marshfield, Ore. With his 16-year-old nephew, Alton Covell, he is held in the county jail after indictment on a murder charge in connection with the death of Mrs. Fred Covell, Sept. 2.

The nephew, it is said by the authorities, has confessed that he killed his stepmother while under the influence of his crippled uncle. The confession tells how the youth, hypnotized by the bed-ridden man, crept up behind his stepmother on the morning of Sept. 2, while she was at work in her kitchen, and clamping over her face a cloth soaked with ammonia, smothered her to death.

The astrologer, according to his purported admission and to the confession of the nephew, based his schemes for the killing of Mrs. Covell and for wiping out at least a dozen persons of Coos County upon the stars.

L. S. May, a criminologist, returning from Marshfield, where he investigated the death of Mrs. Fred Covell, said that Arthur Covell, under indictment for the murder, had planned several other crimes, according to evidence uncovered and statements attributed to the prisoner.

Mr. May said he was decoding horoscopes which Covell had drawn up, and would submit to the Oregon authorities evidence that Covell planned to murder E. J. Pressey, a wealthy Oregon dairyman, and his wife and three children and burn the bodies by firing the residence.

The plans of Arthur Covell were so minutely detailed that they even called for the removal of windows and doors before the home of the victim was burned. The stolen articles were to be used in a home which the Covells intended to build. Even wills were to be written in advance, turning the money over to the astrologer or his agents.

"One will was in the hands of the authorities when I left Marshfield, and it was so cleverly drawn up that it can hardly be detected as counterfeit.

"Mrs. Covell apparently had an inkling of previous crimes and of those being planned. She had threatened exposure and the uncle and nephew had decided to get her out of the way. That is my conclusion after talking with Covell.

"The crippled uncle owns a typewriter, the type of which can be changed at will. The typebar on the machine contains a large number of novel keys and lettering. With this machine the uncle devised a code system for his nephew and wrote out his 'orders' in code."

Masks of Midnight

By JAMES W. EGAN

ONE of the library windows rattled slightly. It was the west window, unlocked, and affording easy access to the room.

Out of a shadowy armchair lifted the figure of a man. Carefully, in the dark, he picked his way to the nearest wall. Despite the deep gloom he made his way without accident or noise.

Perhaps the greater part of a minute was required of him to reach his objective point. And during this brief time the west window was opened and another person had slipped into the room.

The man by the wall waited until the intruder was well within, then stretched forth a hand. A switch snapped, and sudden light flooded the place.

Revealed by the electric light was a man roughly dressed and masked rather thoroughly by a huge cotton handkerchief which covered most of his features. A bitter exclamation escaped his lips as he stood revealed.

"Can you beat it for——"

Abruptly the surprised newcomer stopped. He had gotten a fair look at the man who had turned on the light, and it added vastly to his amazement. For the man by the wall, although in correct evening attire, was wearing a mask.

The latter now spoke.

"A bit of coincidence, eh," he uttered easily, "that two like us should meet thus at midnight? It's rather remarkable, really. Two souls with but a single thought—robbery and pillage. And I feared at first you might be a policeman."

"Youse is a burglar, too, huh?" The last comer found voice. His tone was harsh and his diction poor. "You don't look the part, buddy, even if you have got a mask on. I don't make you."

"Have you ever heard of Duyvil, the society thief—the gentleman burglar?"

"No, I ain't," growled the other. "Dat your name?"

"You may call me Duyvil," was the response. "That is, during the short time we shall spend together. And you are——"

"I ain't nobody," in surly accents. "So youse is a gentleman burglar, eh? I've read about dem in stories, but youse is the first guy I ever seen. I always figured that stuff was bunk. Wot business has a burglar runnin' around in evenin' duds—huh?"

"All a matter of taste, my dear chap. Clothes do not make either the man or the malefactor."

"Aw, wot's the use of all this guffin'? Some bull will see dese lights on and come around to see what it's all about, and den——"

"I'll pull down the shade. I don't think we'll attract any official attention if that's done, and it will be easier to work with the lights on." The self-confessed gentleman burglar stepped to the window and drew the shade.

"Say, listen, buddy," began the other. "I works alone on my jobs, and I wasn't figurin' on runnin' into any opposition on dis lay. I don't know youse from Adam, and——"

"My dear fellow," sharply interrupted the man in evening attire, "please recall I was here first. However, I'm willing to waive my rights. Though I prefer working alone, I think under the circumstances we may as well divide whatever loot we shall find. Let us turn this trick amicably."

"Youse mean split fifty-fifty?"

"Certainly. There is a safe in the wall.

I was about to tackle the combination when you intruded. Perhaps you had better work on it. I confess I'm a bit clumsy at opening those things."

"Dat's my graft, buddy. But no monkey-business while I'm fingurin' dat box—huh?"

"I give you my word of honor. There is honor among thieves, isn't there?"

"Huh!" expressed the other. In a few seconds he was tackling the small wall safe, testing the combination with adroit fingers.

"Say, dere ain't anybody home in dis dump, is dere? My dope is dat de family is all out of the city."

"I know there is no one home. This place is owned by Mrs. Thurman Dorn, and she is spending the week-end in Connecticut. She gave the servants a vacation before she departed. We have the house to ourselves."

"Dat's good," grunted his companion.

"I suppose I should feel a twinge of conscience for treating Mrs. Dorn this way," murmured the gentleman burglar. "I've been a guest in her home many times. A charming and lovable widow——"

"Widow?" The other looked away from the safe he was working upon.

"Widow by decree." He in the evening clothes seemed not to observe the trace of interest manifested by his companion. "She divorced her husband a year or two ago. Dorn was an awful rotter, I've heard—low as they make 'em, and must have made her life a misery for a while. He's in South America now, I believe. Probably be a good thing for her if he stays there. Give her a chance at a little happiness, perhaps. Gossip has it that she is liked very much by Pierce Craig, head of the big private detective agency, and who knows——"

The man with the handkerchief mask muttered something savage.

"What did you say?" queried the gentleman burglar.

"Nothin'. I'm just against all dicks on principle. Dey ain't no good."

"At times they can be annoying. Yet I imagine any chap on earth would be superior to this Dorn, if what——"

"Aw, can dat bunk. You talk too much. I'm interested in the dough and not society doin's," irritably pronounced the man at the safe, finally solving the combination.

Once open, the interior of the receptacle revealed a small packet of bills and a tin box.

"Six hundred dollars—three hundred apiece, eh?" remarked the gentleman burglar, after a count of the money. "Not much of a haul. Disappointing, I'd say. I thought Mrs. Dorn left more cash about. She is quite wealthy in her own right."

"Well, let's see wot's in the tin box," growled his confederate.

"Probably little of value."

"We can take a look, can't we?" The tone was almost a snarl.

"Oh, to be sure. If there is a key—here it is. Now for the box."

The so-called Duyvil unlocked the metal container and drew out a package of faded letters.

"Addressed to Mrs. Dorn," he uttered. "Ancient love letters, I suppose. Of course they're no good to us. We'll have to be content with three hundred dollars apiece, my dear fellow."

"Well, if youse don't want dem, give dem to me," said the other.

"What for? What good will they do you?" in seeming surprise.

"Youse can never tell. And I ain't overlookin' any bets. Dey may be worth nothin', and dey may be worth a whole lot—to somebody."

"I don't see how. Besides, I——"

"Listen, buddy." The rougher member of the duo spoke earnestly. "Never youse mind why, but I'm kinda anxious to have dem letters. I'll make youse a proposition."

"Yes?" He in evening attire expressed the word curiously.

"We took six hundred dollars outa dis box. Youse said it was a poor haul. Dat's right, for a dump like dis. But I want dem letters. Give dem to me and you can have the whole six hundred. Ain't dat fair?"

"Suspiciously fair. In fact, it leads one to conjecture that the missives have an intrinsic value much in excess of the sum of money mentioned. I don't know that I——"

"Now, listen." The other was growing

impatient. "Dey's ain't no use to you. But I want dem, and dat's my price. I'm gamblin' myself, and maybe I'm out three hundred bucks."

"This is odd. Decidedly odd, my dear fellow," Duyvil declared. "There's something behind this. If you want these letters you'll have to come clean. Speak up."

"Aw, dere ain't—well, I know one of the maids here. Peg's her name. She put me wise to some stuff about Mrs. Dorn, and I know dem letters mean somethin'. Dat's all. Come on, let's split fifty-fifty. You take the dough and I'll take the documents. Huh?"

"Fifty-fifty? How can I be sure it will be an equal division? You do not look like the soul of square dealing, old chap. To let you have the letters and keep the money might be a grievous error. Then——"

"Gentleman burglar, huh?" came viciously. "I dig up the dope on dis stuff, and den you want to grab it off. But don't kid yourself, buddy. To me dem letters are worth dough. You couldn't raise a dime on 'em. Take the money and be wise. Come on. Let's divvy."

"I'll concede the letters may be worthless to me," said Duyvil; "but a gentleman burglar has his ethics, old fellow. And I strongly suspect a blackmailing plot behind all this. While I might be a party to robbing a lady like Mrs. Dorn of her cash—she can spare it—never will I acquiesce in defaming her character, or bringing more misery on her head. So these letters stay right here."

"Dat's the game, huh?" The words were malevolent. "All right, Mr. Gentleman Burglar."

With a quick move the other had whipped into sight an ugly automatic pistol. This he trained on Duyvil.

"There needn't be any further camouflage." His voice had changed astonishingly. "I'm going to take those letters by force. I wouldn't make any false moves. I'm a desperate man, and I'll shoot if I have to."

"Yes, Mr. Dorn, I believe you are desperate." Duyvil was very calm. "Yet you cannot have these letters. I wouldn't shoot if I were you, because—Parks!" He raised his voice.

"Yes, sir," promptly came a response from without.

"You and Bigelow all set for rough stuff?" went on Duyvil.

"Fingers on the triggers, sir," was the reply.

"Will you shoot now, Mr. Dorn?" Duyvil's question was polite.

"What the devil is up, anyway?" He of the cotton mask lowered his weapon. "And why do you call me Dorn? And——"

"Oh, I was fairly sure of you all the time, even if you did try to assume the rôle of a roughneck housebreaker. You see, we were waiting for you; for two or three nights, in fact. We knew you'd come.

"When Mrs. Dorn found out her no-good husband was in town—you landed from a South American steamship last week, didn't you?—she was very much worried. Nobody knows better than she what a scoundrel you are, and how much trouble you can cause. Oh, she had cause to be anxious!

"I am a very good friend to Mrs. Dorn, as it happens. I wanted to help her. So a little scheme was arranged, with the assistance of Peg, the maid you believed your friend. A serious mistake, Thurman Dorn.

"Through Peg you learned of the letters in the tin box—presumably referring to dark chapters in your divorced wife's past, which even you knew nothing of. Of course not. There are no such chapters. But a rotter like you would believe—and so you wanted to get a hold over the lady who had been your wife.

"We knew you would be after the letters. As a matter of cold, cruel fact, the letters are worthless. Nothing to them. Just bait for a trap.

"Mrs. Dorn went away, gave the servants leave, and left the affair in my hands. You came in person, as I had hoped, and I even teased you along to make sure what it was you wished. For a little while I had to be a burglar myself."

"So there ain't no Duyvil—huh?"

"Yes, there is, really. A gentleman burglar, too. However, I've never been able to

lay hands on anything except his name, which I used tonight. And now I will give you some advice, Mr. Thurman Dorn. A steamer to Argentine leaves tomorrow. Be on that, or—would you prefer a long sojourn in one of our penal institutions?"

"You've got the goods on me—or seem to have, whoever you are," muttered Thurman Dorn. "I saw a chance to make a big play, and I came after the letters. Damn that lying Peg! I suppose you are a bull, and these guys hidden around here are the same. All right—I'll take Argentine. So you are a friend of Mrs. Dorn—huh? Must be a mighty close one."

"And, fortunately, an influential one, Dorn. My name happens to be Pierce Craig. I'm head of that agency I mentinued—one of those dicks you don't like on general principles."

"Craig, huh?" mumbled Dorn.

"Yes, I am Craig. And, incidentally, the man who believes Mrs. Dorn as fine a woman as ever lived. Maybe I've taken slightly unorthodox methods to save her from you, but I was resolved the obnoxious rotter who spoiled part of her life and who wished to spoil the rest would never hurt her again."

"In love with her? I thought as much." The other endeavored to sneer.

"I'll admit it. And I believe—but why bandy words with you? Perhaps while you are heading toward Argentine your former wife will be going to the altar with Pierce Craig—and there'll be no rascally ex-husband on hand to create trouble. Come on, let's get started. I'm going to make sure you get aboard of that steamer for Argentine tomorrow!"

A WONDERFUL CONSCIENCE

THERE are people with all sorts of consciences, but the champion of oddities was a convicted man who became so disgusted with the law's delay that he settled the matter of serving his sentence in his own way. Here is the story, that comes from Lexington, Ky:

A white-haired farmer from an up-State county has settled in an original and unique way the problem of the law's delay. At the same time he has earned the distinction of being the only man who ever broke into Eddyville prison, although many have broken out.

The forlorn, begrimed individual recently presented himself at the warden's office.

"Lemme in," he said to the keeper at the big gate.

"Who are you and what do you want?" the sentry asked.

"I'm Gilbert Perkins from Union county, that's who I am, and I've walked more'n a hundred miles to git here. I want to begin servin' my three years. They gimme that fur shootin' a man up in Union County last year."

Pressed for further details, Perkins told the warden that through the intervention of friends three stays of execution had been granted him.

"I didn't want 'em," he explained, "but some of my friends were sorry to see me go to jail and they got those stays. I got tired of hangin' around with three years o' jail on my mind and I just uped and come along to have it over with."

The dumfounded warden, who only a few months ago used machine guns to dislodge escaping prisoners who were shooting up the place, asked Perkins for his papers.

"I ain't got no papers," the old man told him.

"I can't let you in," Warden Chilton replied.

"You don't mean to say I've walked all the way for nothing?" moaned Perkins. "Can't you fix it up some way?"

The warden promised he would and phoned the sheriff of Union County. The astonished officer gasped when he heard the story. He agreed to send commitment papers and Warden Chilton agreed to allow Perkins to remain at the prison as a guest of the State until they arrived. For once Warden Chilton is not worried over the possible escape of a prisoner.

Sawbones Smashes a Record

By EDGAR DANIEL KRAMER

WHEN six burglar-proof bank vaults in the course of a single fortnight yielded up their golden contents to expert professional attention, and the loot amounted to nineteen thousand dollars or more, the robberies were deemed worthy to be brought to the attention of Detective Ben Shields.

"I never lose my man!" Shields boasted, and not without reason, as he smashed his huge hairy fist down upon his desk and mixed his metaphors with careless abandon. "Just leave it to me. I always bring home the bacon. I get my bird, no matter how high or how low he flies. It may take some time, of course, but sooner or later I always land him. I'll get this guy, too, you'll see."

And while Shields thus talked on, in a town less than one hundred miles away Sawbones Wade paused in the act of drilling the old-fashioned bank safe and snapped off his flash. He had instinctively caught the sound of stealthy feet approaching just beyond the flimsy partition behind which he was working. He rose and stepped away from the safe as a man, bulking huge in the shadows, entered the cage and reached for the electric switch. Sawbones, who was behind him now, rose on his toes, his arms swung downward viciously, his revolver-butt met the other's skull and the shadowy figure crumpled to the floor with a tired sigh.

"I couldn't let him get the lights going," Sawbones muttered, as he leaned over his victim. "He'll come around all right, but I surely gave him an ugly wallop. I've never been in a jam, and I'm not wanting to start now. That was a mean slam."

"It may take me some time," Ben Shields was saying, while Sawbones was leaning over the unconscious man, whom he had felled. "Whoever this bird is, I'll get the goods on him and send him up for a long stretch. I never lose my man. I never do."

"I'm through with this graft," Sawbones was resolving the next afternoon, rising to stretch his long legs and to stride up and down the aisle of the day-coach as the accommodation twisted and turned and climbed into the hills. "This is the finish! I have cracked my last vault. Ugh!" he shivered. "I can hear the thud of my gun-butt yet, when I had to smash the poor devil's face, as he flopped to the floor. Ugh! I'm more than lucky I didn't croak him. According to the paper he came around O. K., and I'm mighty glad. To the devil with easy money! I'm more than fed up on that game. Sooner or later it would be lights out for me or some other chap. Blood! Ugh! I'm chucking the graft before that time comes. I'm starting over again, and I'm starting clean. I've got rid of the swag by sending it anonymously to a home for orphan kids. I've just got enough coin to set me up as a doctor. That's what I was trained for, anyway. Here's where Sawbones Wade, bank burglar and expert cracksman, fades out of the picture. I'm going to be a real honest-to-goodness medicine-man. That's me!"

On a night in early spring, as the wind sighed around the eaves of the old house, and the cold rain splashed insistently like ghostly fingers against the shuttered windows, Doctor Graham was very evidently troubled. He was sitting in an easy-chair

before the fire with an open book in his lap. He was not reading, however, nor was he smoking, although his teeth were set firmly upon the stem of his black briar. He was sitting there alone, stiff, alert, his big frame as taut as a fiddle-string, as if he were listening for some one or something, some one or something of which he was afraid. He could hear his wife moving about in the room immediately above. His eyes, burning feverishly in their deep sockets, were fixed upon the fire. He started spasmodically as a log crackled and fell into the ashes.

That morning a mud-splattered roadster had come over the hills and stopped in front of the Howell House, the town's only hotel, which was situated a few doors nearer the combination railroad station and general store than the Graham home.

"Got a doctor in town now, I see," the mud-splashed driver began talking to old man Howell, the lanky, grizzled hotel proprietor, clerk, bell-boy and general factotum, who stared at the new guest quizzically with near-sighted eyes as he signed the dog-eared register with a grand flourish.

"Benjamin Shields," Howell piped, as he blotted the signature.

"Got a doctor here now, I see," Shields repeated.

"Yep," the old man answered with indifference, deftly shifting his tobacco from one cheek pouch to the other and carefully patting it into place with his tongue.

"How long?"

"Quite some time now."

"Here long?" Shields asked.

"A year—more er less."

"Name's Graham, eh?"

"Yep, an' thar ain't a finer man in these hills, I'm a-tellin' you, stranger."

"Where'd he come from?"

"Ain't never asked him," Howell sniffed.

"Don't know where he came from, eh?"

"Don't know an' don't keer a ding!" Howell snapped. "All we folks keers about is thet he's with us."

"Good doc, I guess."

"Ain't none better!" the old man waxed enthusiastic. "Allie Ott hed aches an' pains fer years. Couldn't git about nohow. Th' doc's got her doin' fine. Lem Wood busted his arm to bits fallin' off th' haymow. Doc's fixed him up so's you ain't able to say which arm was broke. Th' Abell baby——"

"Folks like him around here?" Shields interrupted.

"Like him?" Howell cackled. "Folks plumb love th' ground he walks on. Doc's so in right with us thet he's married one o' our gals. I'm a-tellin' you confidential, stranger, thet it would be kinder defyin' th' lightnin' fer any one to say er do anything agin Doc Graham in this community. He'd be a-runnin' his head inter trouble, accordin' to my way o' thinkin'."

"Huh!" Shields snorted, as he swung away and strolled down to the doctor's office. "Huh!" he snorted again, pausing to read the sign, whose gold letters had already lost much of their original glitter. "Huh!" he snorted a third time. "Runnin' his head into trouble!"

He shrugged, climbed the flight of six wooden steps, crossed the veranda and pushed into Graham's office. He closed the door softly and stood staring around. A small fire burned in an open fire-place. The room was bare save for a gaudily colored calendar between the two windows, a framed diploma from a world-famous medical school, a State Board certificate issued to W. H. Graham, and rows of stiff-backed chairs against three of the whitewashed walls. The murmur of voices came to the detective from beyond the curtained doorway. Then the curtains parted abruptly.

"It's him!" Shields muttered under his breath, as the doctor appeared, smiling and talking to a rosy-cheeked young woman with a baby in her arms. "Wearin' whiskers, but him just the same. He ain't foolin' me."

"Bring the baby around to-morrow," Graham was saying, his voice all sympathetic kindness, "and we'll have the little fellow as fit as a fiddle in no time at all."

Then Graham caught sight of the visitor. A shadow seemed to grow over the light in his eyes.

"My name's Shields," the detective began

as the door banged behind the woman. "Ben Shields of the Detective Bureau."

"A detective's a curiosity up here, Mr. Shields," Graham laughed easily, without fluttering an eyelid. "Pretty law-abiding lot of folks hereabouts. We haven't had any one in the lock-up for months. And the last occupant didn't belong here; he was a tramp from the outside."

"Mighty interestin'," Shields grunted.

"Anything I can do for you?" Graham asked.

"Just came over the hills in the rain," Shields explained, his eyes never leaving the physician's face. "That's sure one awful road leadin' to this God-forsaken place. Reckon I should have come by train. Anyway, I feel a cold comin' on. Thought maybe you could fix me up."

"I certainly can," Graham assured him, going to a cabinet and placing several tablets in a tiny envelope. "Take three of these every two hours and you'll never know what a cold is again."

"Never know what a cold is again," Shields kept repeating on his way back to the hotel. "I wonder if that bird is pullin' something."

He coaxed the hotel cat to his room, where he crushed three of the tablets and placed the resulting powder in a saucer of cream, which he set before the tabby. The cat sniffed at the proffered treat and turned away.

"I thought so!" Shields exulted, as he settled on the edge of the bed. "I felt you wouldn't let this chance to get me slide by. This stunt proves beyond a doubt that you are the bimbo I'm after, and it cooks your goose mighty brown, son. This it attempted murder, and it will only make things harder for you. You can't croak me so easily. Nix! I wasn't born yesterday. I'm just a bit too wise. There's not much green in my eye. No, sirree!"

Then the cat stole back to the saucer and greedily lapped up the cream.

"What do you know?" Shields muttered, somewhat taken aback. "What do you know about that? The cat's a goner, sure!"

He tumbled back upon the bed and went to sleep. When he wakened several hours later the cat was scratching at the door in an effort to get out of the room.

"Cat's O. K.," Shields yawned. "Evidently the doc didn't try any of his monkey-shines, any of his funny stuff, on me. I have to dope out some method of gettin' him away from here without these yaps gettin' wise. The old boy downstairs may be right and the woman with the baby seemed to think Graham, one-time burglar and cracksman, was a god. Her eyes told me that much. There's never no tellin' about these primitive folks. They might get mean and start something. You never can dope them. I'm not runnin' any chances. I want to get this guy away from here without any slips. I'll get out in the air and get the old brain to workin'."

Then Ben Shields went downstairs, climbed into his car and drove away through the pouring rain.

"Wonder what he's up to," old man Howell mused, staring after him. "Somethin' tells me he ain't bent on no good. Somethin' tells me thet, somethin' does."

A sharp, shrill, imperative ring of the door-bell caused Graham to jerk to his feet. He took the pipe from his mouth and the stem snapped in his fingers. The book fell to the floor with a dry rustling of rumpled pages.

"It's Shields!" he gasped, tugging at his collar, which of a sudden seemed to choke him.

Again the bell rang—insistently, peremptorily.

"Shall I answer, dear?" a soft voice called from above stairs.

"I'm right here," Graham replied, and his voice was so strained, so unnatural, that it startled him.

The bell shrilled a third time. He pulled himself together with an effort, strode out into the hall and flung the door wide with an air of defiance.

"Hello, Doc!" Clem Lambert greeted him, little rivulets of water running from his garments, as he stood in the flood of warm light that streamed through the doorway. "Thought you was dead er somethin', Doc."

"Hello, Clem!" Graham's relief was evident. "Won't you come in?"

"Too dinged wet, Doc," Clem answered. "Fine weather fer ducks, says I. If this keeps on, we'll all be needin' web-feet 'fore long. I ain't got no time to come in, Doc. I run on ahead so's to let you know you're gittin' a patient, thet feller who jus' come to town this mornin'. He's pretty well smashed up, too. Found him up to th' Three Mile Turn at th' foot o' th' cliff with his buzz-wagon piled all 'round him. He's unconscious, but still breathin'. Th' boys be a-hustlin' him down fer you to git busy on. It's a miracle he wasn't done fer when he took thet tumble."

"Shields!" Graham whispered. "They're bringing him to me!"

Clem was clumping down the gravel path to meet the bobbing lanterns that were luminous blurs in the misty darkness. As though from far away Graham heard the shuffling of rubber-booted feet and the sounds of muffled voices. Leaving the door wide, he staggered to the foot of the stairs.

"Ruth!" he called softly.

"What is it, dear?" his wife queried, as she appeared on the landing.

"An operation," Graham told her wearily. "A very serious one, I'm afraid. Stranger went over the cliff at Three Mile Turn in his car, and the folks are bringing him here. They're in the yard now. I want you to help with the anesthetic. Feel up to it?"

She nodded, smiled and started down the stairs.

"This way!" Graham called sharply to the knot of dripping men, who were stamping across the veranda, bearing their helpless burden upon an improvised stretcher. "Right down the hall, men, and into this room. That's fine!" he exclaimed, as they set the stretcher carefully upon the floor.

Very deliberately Graham wheeled his operating-table under the hooded light and arranged his instruments. He moved like an automaton.

"Now give me a hand, men!" he snapped after everything was in order. "We'll put Mr. Ben Shields on the table where I can get at him!"

There was something harshly cruel in his voice that caused Ruth to stare at her husband with puzzled bewilderment in her eyes.

"Stand back now, men!" Graham ordered. "This isn't going to be pleasant to watch." He was going over the detective with tremulous fingers. "Still breathing. Just a flutter of the heart, though. Bones O. K. No internal injuries, I'm hoping. Concussion! Skull pressure! Ah, here it is! I'll have to operate!" He was actually chuckling. "There's a bit of your skull pressing upon your very clever brain, Ben Shields. I'll have to remove it. Of course, your cleverness couldn't foresee your going over Three Mile Turn and giving me this chance. You're clever, Mr. Ben Shields, but all your cleverness cannot help you now. I have things my way in spite of you. You are not likely to hound any more poor devils to hell, Mr. Ben Shields. That's one sure bet."

"Hurry!" Ruth pleaded. "He may be dying! Seconds may save him!"

"Ether ready?" Graham asked, staring at his wife queerly.

"Yes."

"We'll have to work fast," the physician laughed.

The watchers stared at each other in awed wonder, utterly unable to comprehend Graham's seeming mirth in the presence of death.

"Put him to sleep," Graham whispered.

Ether fumes filled the room as Ruth placed the cup over Shields's mouth and nostrils and poured the anesthetic upon the absorbent with deft skill, acquired of much practice.

"Right!" Graham breathed. "Watch his pulse! He's gone!" He leaned over the unconscious form. "Now, Mr. Ben Shields! Now!"

Then the scalpel, gleaming brightly in the light, flashed down like a living thing.

"You sure have passed the buck to me," Ben Shields sighed as he was taking leave of Graham and Ruth some three months later. "You sure had one swell chance to make me watch the daisies growing from underneath and you muffed it. That's

what's got me. You let that chance slip by and let me come back."

"I had my chance," Graham answered. "I realized that I could get away with it, too, but when it came to the show-down, professional pride or something made me side-step the play. I did my best. I came clean."

Ruth smiled up proudly at her husband, who was staring at Shields. The detective was shaking his head disconsolately.

"You sure passed the buck to me," Shields continued sadly, "and that record of mine is gone clean to the merry bow-wows as a result. It's smashed absolutely to smithereens! I sure was proud of that record, too, Doc. Never again can I say that I always get my man. Never again! I've slipped up once! I've been trailin' Sawbones Wade for months and months, goin' onto two years. I was just about ready to grab him when I landed at the bottom of Three Mile Turn. Now something's tellin' me I'm never goin' to nab him. I'm thinkin' that bird's fluttered clean away. Now ain't that hell?" he demanded abruptly, forgetful of Ruth's presence. "Ain't that just hell, Doc?"

Then the south-bound train appeared around the shoulder of the nearest hill and rapidly approached the station.

"So-long, folks!" Ben Shields choked. "Good luck, Doc!"

"So-long, Ben!" Graham answered huskily, as their hands clasped. "But I can't say I'm anyways sorry about that record."

"Forget it!" Ben Shields flung back over his shoulder, as he raced for the train. "Forget it, Doc, but keep in mind that I'm comin' back to bag some partridges when the bird season's on. So-long!"

THE PRISON RAT

CROOKS and ex-crooks of every brand were among the speakers lately at a dinner of the Society of Arts and Sciences at the Hotel Biltmore. The Marshall-Stillman Movement, which advocates a practical sympathetic effort to restore criminals to useful citizenship, was credited with "bringing back" several of those present and many others.

"There is not much religion in prison," said "Hotel Bill," who has done many "bits" in various prisons here and abroad, "but lots of Christianity. The most religious man I knew during my experiences in penal institutions was the prison 'rat.' I have more respect for the fellow who got out of prison with a hacksaw than the one who went before the Parole Board with a Bible in his hand."

"Give the gang a place to hang out in instead of on the street corner," said "The Million Dollar Kid," a product of New York's East Side, who has done several terms for hold-ups. "Give us a chance. We can help you and you can help us. You don't want to get stuck-up going home some night, do you? We need money. Help us get it. Give the kids from twelve up a chance who are in the wrong environment."

"I don't believe in putting a halo over the head of a man who plots to rob and kill," declared Bronx County Judge Gibbs, who talked on the legal aspects of criminology. "We have men in this country who kill first and rob afterward, as was shown in the killing of two Brooklyn messengers.

"So far as the judge is concerned, his duty is to put men of that type under as long a term as the law permits. They are the results of an unjust condition. It is the law's duty to put them under restraint. I would favor an indeterminate sentence, as I don't think a judge should say for how long a man should be sentenced."

The former criminals at the dinner are now employed in various occupations and assisting in recruiting those who have not yet sought the right path to get the Marshall Stillman idea.

By the Breadth of a Hair

By ARTHUR B. REEVE and MARGARET W. REEVE

PART TWO

CHAPTER THREE

CAME the day when Teddy was to be taken "up the river." Beth had fallen under the spell of an overshadowing depression from which Mary vainly strove to release her. She had taken Beth into her own apartment. But that night for Beth had been sleepless.

"Mary," she asked with a pitiful, eager smile in the morning, "could I—could Teddy and I be married?"

"Why not? There is no legal disability, if you are willing."

"I think," explained Beth slowly, "it would so encourage the poor boy—put heart in him—to know I was—his."

Mary smiled encouragement.

"It is possible. Of course, from the strictly legal standpoint, if his sentence were ever commuted to life imprisonment, for instance, you would be free, if you wished. He would be legally dead, then, you know."

"Oh, Mary!" Beth was at once grateful for the information Mary had given, reproachful at the second thought. It was impossible that the courts should not see the case ultimately as she saw it.

Meanwhile the machinery of the law had its way. Teddy at last sat in the registry-room of the State prison and talked with the big-handed, big-hearted warden.

Then he was conducted down a flight of steps and past huge steel-barred doors, along corridors and through the regular prison, until at last he was in what the prison officials called the section of the condemned. Every one else calls this the secret heart of the grim place, the death-house.

It was made up of two rows of cells, some eighteen or twenty in all, a little more modern in construction than the ten or twelve hundred archaic caverns that were the cells of the main prison. At each end of the corridor sat a guard, armed, with eyes never off the rows of cells day or night. In the wall on one side was a door—the little green door—the door from the death-house to the real death chamber.

With but one idea Beth did not rest until it came about that the strangest of marriages was to be consummated. Beth and Teddy were to be married in the death-house.

Mary had seen more than the subjective effect on the two forlorn lovers. It loomed large in her hope for a new trial. Beth, as his wife, could not be compelled to testify against her husband.

"Mary," murmured the pathetic little bride on the great day, "no matter how Teddy has to be dressed, I am going to look like a bride. He can't see himself; his clothes will not worry him. But he must see a bride with the white veil, the gown and slippers. Only I am going to carry a book of prayers instead of flowers. Maybe God will bless us—just a little bit." Beth tried to smile bravely through her tears.

It was a sad little procession that made its way into the death-house, Beth, winsome in her white gown, Mary in blue—"true blue," she said, "for friendship"—and the old chaplain of the prison. Teddy was waiting eagerly.

"Till death do us part!"

"Dearest Beth—my wife," was all he said a few moments later when the lumps in their throats at those unexpectedly om-

inous words permitted and he held her little hand.

Mary, the warden, the keepers were the only witnesses. Tears were in all their eyes—more, now that it was over. Then it seemed so cruel to tear those young souls apart.

Too quickly the ceremony was over. Only a short time was Teddy allowed to be with Beth. Then the parting. He kissed Beth tenderly, love-hunger in his eyes. His hands slipped off her shoulders so slowly that it was painful to see.

"Never mind, Teddy! Our honeymoon will come—later—when you are free," Beth whispered bravely.

His eyes gleamed, his form grew more erect as he suppressed every natural desire. The optimism of love seemed now to spur him on. Beth saw it and was satisfied.

"Up the river!"

Beth took up her abode in a tiny house in the hills. From its windows one could look down on the barracks-like pile of stone with the evil little black-barred slits of windows.

Nearly always there is a woman, wife, sweetheart, mother of a condemned man who lives in the shadow of the prison where she can look down at the grim walls, hoping and fearing.

There was no doubt what it was. Its very atmosphere breathed the word "prison." Even the ugly clutter of tall-chimneyed workshops did not silence the word. Every stone, every grill, every glint of sun on a sentry's rifle spelt "prison."

Strange manner of setting-up housekeeping! It was broken only by Mary's frequent visits, Mary's reports of the outside world. Beth listened to most of it with scant interest. All her real thoughts were centered on one thing.

It was on one of these visits that Mary threw down a newspaper in disgust. Beth looked at her wonderingly and asked:

"What's wrong, my dear?"

"Listen. 'Jason Marbury, heir to Marbury millions, marries Etta Craven. Pretty nurse to founder of fortune.' Then it goes on to say that it was a quiet wedding, witnessed by only a few intimate friends, and says: 'As soon as the business of settling up the estate is finished the bride and groom will go abroad.'"

Beth was silent. Her thoughts were with Theodore Marbury and the honeymoon they would have when he was cleared of this awful charge.

Mary had told it because she knew it had to be told sooner or later. Now she encouraged: "Beth, you have this consolation. You were first. I wonder"—she assumed a reflective air—"if there is anything more back of this marriage than love? I'm going to investigate that happy bride and groom."

So also it was that another lesser headline had to be told: "Dr. Ross McKillen retires from Marbury Company. Starts on tour of Europe."

"That little bit of news, Beth, recalls to my mind something I had intended to tell you. I have had my eye on Doctor McKillen—or an eye I hire occasionally. I don't like him. He's a game bird, but he flies funny, as the hunters say."

Beth smiled at the phrase.

"What about the doctor, Mary?"

"Well, he has left the Marbury company; retired, they give out. But I wonder if that fight with Jason long ago at the Supper Club may be the real cause, or part of it." Mary was thoughtful. "He is going to Europe, too; starts in a day or two, my operative tells me. Somehow I have a feeling that if I could know just why he was going abroad I would have a clue to the murder."

Slight of figure, Beth became pale of face and wan. In her shone an indomitable spirit, unconquered even by the slow torture of her lonely vigil.

Except for such few hours that she engaged in her simple household duties, with now and then a short walk in the country, she was always watching that bleak stone house of atonement. Yet, though her spirit was unconquered, it needed no physician to tell that the dimming of her life would come if——

And Mary was a physician. Often Mary hated to leave Beth alone, even for a night. The only companion Beth would have was

Teddy's dog. He knew Beth almost as well as Teddy and would come to her often with a mute question in his big eyes: "Where's Teddy?" Laddie was a collie, intelligent, reserved with strangers, but faithful to death with those he knew and loved.

At night Beth couldn't sleep. She would sit up in a chair by the window watching the moon, tracing mentally the clouds with the light rays behind them, watching for one with a silver lining. Her face would be tense. Breathing hard, she would be called back to the grim facts by a paw thrust gently on her lap or a cold, moist muzzle rubbing her hand. A word to him of love and Laddie would curl up at her feet.

Laddie never left her for long. When he wasn't with her he was sleeping on an old hunting coat that Teddy had let Beth have once. That coat and Beth belonged to his master. He would watch them both.

Deeply interested, Beth spent the time reading all the evidence, hundreds of pages of it. It was cold, hard, brutal testimony. Eagerly in it she sought hope for the ashen-faced man and the pallid little wife, herself. At times when Beth came to some testimony that she knew was perjured she would stamp her foot in indignation, then fall back weakly in the chair. Laddie would growl and lick her hands in commiseration.

"Day after day," she sighed, "as I have watched and waited, I am hoping against hope. The courts are so slow, the law so technical. There have been executions since I came here, too, and I shudder at them. Will his appeal be denied, also?"

Once a month she left the window, walked to the prison, where the warden was very kind to her. Then she could see Teddy.

There were bars between them, besides the regular screen. But she could have an hour's talk, and in these talks he described to her exactly every detail of his life in the prison. They agreed to certain hours when they would think of each other.

Counsel could see the condemned as often as necessary. At such times Mary Mannix would sit in the little cage and talk with the convicted man across the three-foot space between cell and screen.

Teddy was tall, pasty-faced now with the prison pallor. In his face was written the determination of despair. He was a man in whose blue eyes was the queer, half-insane light of hope. One knew that if it had not been for the little girl at the window on the hill the hope would probably long ago have faded. But this man knew she was always there, thinking, thinking, eagerly planning in aid of every new scheme in the long fight for freedom.

Mary had never given up hope that she might elicit some suspicion from Teddy that she could run down into a certainty with her detective work. But to her the most he would ever say was: "The fact is that I was there. But I do not know what had happened. The nurse has told that. There is no use attacking that. I know you think it is strange that one in the very shadow of the death chair can talk so impersonally of his own case. Sometimes I think it is not my case, but the case of some one else. And then—these bars—that door!"

On one side was life, such as it was; on the other, instant death.

None entered the little house in the hills unchallenged.

"Down, Laddie; I'm not going to eat Beth up." Then the dog would come forward contritely to receive the caress from Mary, and as quickly go back to Beth.

"Anything new, Mary?" Beth's thin hands would nervously clasp and unclasp each other.

"Only this cablegram from my agent abroad," Mary had to report once. "He keeps close watch on Doctor McKillen. The doctor is a regular guy over there. I have just heard that, no matter how Jason may feel toward him, he receives a letter every week from Jason's wife."

Beth looked up.

"I wonder what Etta Marbury has to tell Doctor McKillen now? Do you suppose it is about the case? But why should he be so interested in that, now? Oh, it is all so confusing."

Months lengthened over the year, until at last came the handing down of the final decision on the appeal.

Mary lifted the knocker of the door re-

luctantly. Always she had disliked being the harbinger of evil news. She listened to Beth running down the stairs in her eagerness to hear the decision. The door opened wide. Beth stood in the doorway on tiptoe.

Leaning forward, both arms outstretched, she gave a cry of pain when she read Mary's clouded face.

"Mary—will there be—a new trial?" Fearfully she listened for the answer. But she did not look. She flung her arms around Mary and put her head on her friend's shoulder and shuddered.

"They can't seem to see it, Beth." It was the only way to soften the word that the courts had refused Teddy a new trial.

"Oh, Lord, have mercy. What will happen? He can't die. That boy has never done a thing to hurt a soul."

Mary held her close. Finally Beth looked up at her.

"Why wouldn't they grant him a new trial? Did they say?"

"Yes, Beth. They said that there has been no adequate new evidence that would justify the reopening of the case. They said there were no errors in the first trial that prejudiced the rights of the defendant——"

"No errors. And are those the only reasons?"

"Your marriage since the first trial may make it impossible for you to be called as a witness unless you so desire. You know what they made your evidence do in the last one—really made the case of the prosecutor. And it isn't likely you would be willing to testify for them. They know it."

"Did they say that?"

"Not in so many words."

"I understand, Mary." Beth turned slowly to the door of the living-room. Her feet dragged, her head was bowed, and her arms were listless at her sides. She made her way to the little rocker by the table. On the table was Teddy's picture in a small silver frame. She leaned her cheek in the cup of her hand, resting her elbow as she looked at it long and lovingly. Two tears stole down her cheeks and she cried: "Teddy! Teddy!"

At last she could bear it no longer. She opened a little book and commenced reading. Mary looked over her. It was the Twenty-third Psalm. "Even though He lead me into the valley of the shadow of death——" She waited until Beth had finished reading.

Beth looked up at Mary.

"There is no more to be done now," she said with a strange resignation in her voice. "I feel so hopeless. Teddy's honeymoon and mine—will be—in heaven!"

Mary could say nothing. There was nothing to say. Beth glanced away toward the window.

"Many times from that window I have seen a man walk out of that prison gate. I always watch to see what he does, though I know it is no use. If he stands in the free air, stops short and looks up suddenly, taking a long look at every house, I hope. But he always turns for a quick, backward look at the prison and goes half-running down the hill. They always stop in that fashion when the steel doors open outwards. Yet I have always looked and hoped. But I can hope no more—no more. The last chance has gone."

"No—not the last chance. The Governor——"

Beth clutched at it. She laid the book on the table. For a full minute she stared.

"There is not an hour to waste, Mary. Does Teddy know?"

Mary shook her head.

Beth was very quiet these days. The verdict of the trial and the refusal of the Court of Appeals of a new trial had been successive blows to an already shattered spirit. Mary tried to cheer her. But the only flashes of interest and animation manifested by Beth were when she was doing something for Teddy.

"There isn't any time to lose, Mary; no time at all. I am going with you to see the Governor." Beth finished the sentence with a long-drawn sigh and the merest flicker of a smile.

"All right. I'll see about making the appointment with him."

They could not see him that day, but the

first of the week his secretary made the appointment.

So it was that late one Sunday they arrived at Albany to intercede for Teddy the next morning. The Governor had promised to see them.

Secretly Mary was afraid it was hopeless. The evidence as presented had been so convincing—the half-evidence. But she hoped that Beth's personality, the wistfulness of the gentle girl, would touch the Governor's heart.

"You go in alone, Beth. I think it will be better. Without my presence your plea will be more pathetic."

"You think it as hopeless as that, Mary?" asked Beth with a worried glance.

Mary did not answer. The attendant had already called them.

A frightened glance about her, a nervous arranging of her dress, and Beth stepped into the Governor's room. She closed the door silently behind her, one hand on the knob, the other groping helplessly before her. She swayed there like some delicately beautiful, fragile flower bent to earth in a heavy rain.

"Miss Drayton?" the Governor asked. His tone was brusque, but far from unkindly.

Beth nodded, eyes wide open, silently pleading. The kindly man, one of the people himself, rose from his seat and led her to a chair near his desk. He scanned her carefully, noted her gentle beauty in the day of the flippant flapper, her sorrow so wofully betrayed in her beseeching eyes.

"What can I do for you, Miss Drayton?"

His voice recalled Beth to Teddy's miserable plight. She knew that words, nor looks, must express it. She stood again, her hands folded passionately before her,

"I want—I want you to pardon Teddy—Theodore Marbury. Please—oh, please—do it."

He fingered a huge folio of papers on his desk. Beth knew what that was. It was a transcript of the testimony, all the papers in the case.

"But, Miss Drayton, his trial was conducted legally, was it not—everything in order?"

Hopelessly she answered:

"I have read what a great man, Burke, over a century ago said: 'The extreme of justice is the extreme of injustice.' Legally, perhaps, as far as circumstantial evidence goes. But was it *scientifically* circumstantial evidence? It seems that everything went against him—even my love! Oh, Governor, I know, I *know* he didn't do it. He couldn't have done it. Will you please only save him—save him—for me?"

The Governor looked at her with sympathy.

"I will certainly go over the evidence, Miss Drayton, no matter how busy I may otherwise be. I will go over it myself."

"Oh, Governor, if Teddy dies a terrible mistake will be made. If any mistake is made, let it be on the side of mercy. God will bless you a hundred, a thousand times over. Hear me before it is too late. He never killed his uncle—I know it—I know it—my woman's heart, that knows the verities of life, knows it."

By this time Beth was weeping pitifully. Sorrow was in the Governor's eyes as he looked at her frail body shaking with convulsive sobs.

"Miss Drayton," he said as he lowered his voice close to her ear, "if I can honestly pardon him, I'll do it—and I hope I can pardon him, for your sake. Please go home, rest, and I'll see what I can do. I'll let you know before the close of the week."

"Governor, please be lenient in your thoughts—please! There is too much talk in our land about 'It is the law.' Yes—man-made law—and rules of law. Which is more important for the state—for our country—the law or the man—and his liberty? It is a man's life at stake; please, please——" The last word died in a broken-hearted whisper.

The Governor led her to the door himself. Mary was there to meet her. Silently she went to Mary's outstretched arms.

Answering the question in her friend's eyes, Beth murmured:

"He told me nothing definite. He has to look over the evidence—and—and I am afraid——"

A strained, anxious look had come over

her face, to remain there until she knew the Governor's decision.

"I am going home, Mary, to wait—wait until I hear." It was so low that Mary had to lean over her to hear what the distressed girl said in her weakness.

During the remaining days of the week Mary did not relax in her close watch of the case.

One day it was with a stranger to Beth that she came.

"Beth, I have brought Ellen up to see you. She is one of my brightest and most trusted girls. She will be the best Irish cook in two seconds you'd ever want to have or the dearest mother of two boys she is struggling so bravely to raise alone. The last is her real job in life, not the job I have for her."

"Yes, Miss Drayton," put in Ellen with a hearty voice. "I just came from Marbury Manor. I am the cook they have had for several weeks now."

Beth had been lying down. This information was enough to make her sit up.

"Marbury Manor? Just left it?"

"Sure—and I'm going back to it, too, after my Thursday off. That is a house full of grouches. If I wasn't engaged to watch 'em as well as to feed 'em, I'd left long ago."

"Tell me about the folks, Ellen," Beth half-whispered.

"There's trouble brewin'. He is the sweetheart no longer. Mrs. Marbury tries, but he seems to want none of it. His love seems dead—or somethin'. He actually seems to watch her with horror—and suspicion."

Beth wondered as she heard of this subtle change in the relations of Jason Marbury and Etta, his cooling ardor and suspicion.

"When he is not watching her, they are fighting. What a cat-and-dog life to live! I can't find out yet what it is all about, but no good will come of it."

"Nothing?" queried Mary.

"The only cause for quarreling I have heard that might relate to the case was the time Jason Marbury caught her writing a letter to Doctor McKillen in Paris. He had come up quietly behind her, saw it, grabbed it right from under her nose, so to speak. There was a dreadful fuss over it. She was so mad she couldn't fight, and he just made sarcastic fun of her."

"Doctor McKillen in Paris?" Beth remarked. "I thought he was in London."

Mary answered:

"No, Beth. For some reason or other he got out of his hotel hurriedly, took a Channel boat and finally reached Paris. My agent says he seems ill at ease, that he has lost a bit of his grand airs since leaving London. I don't know."

The week, the long week, drew to a close. Again Mary Mannix had to mount to the house in the hills, heavy-hearted.

No one at the window. No one at the door. Mary found Beth seated in a chair, as white as a wraith, staring straight ahead, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. In her hand she clutched a yellow telegram.

"Yes—Mary—I—know—the pardon has been denied." Beth's voice was dead. "The execution is set for the week beginning the tenth—— My God! That's next Monday!"

The message had been practically the same as to Mary. It had not been from the Governor, really. The pardon board had had very strong feelings on the matter, and acting on the advice of the board, rather than precipitate a political row, the Governor had had to refuse to pardon Teddy.

Day by day, hour by hour, now the inevitable approach of the thing they both dreaded.

Beth would pace the floor, up and down the room, in a frenzy of emotion. Then an unnatural lethargy would seize her, a stupor from which it was hard for even Mary to rouse her.

As for Teddy, whenever he looked out of that cage he saw that door. He might close his eyes, but still see it. When he exercised he saw it. Thinking by day and dreaming by night, it was always there. The terrible hours, knowing of the little girl eating her heart out.

Nothing roused interest much in Beth now, not even reports from Ellen of what might be the true character of Etta Craven now beginning to show itself, of Jason now showing actual fear of her, or Mary's specu-

lations whether Etta might have the instincts of a "hammer-slayer." Doctor McKillen had crossed into Germany, it seemed. Was he on his way to Russia? speculated Mary. He was always under close watch of her trailing agent. It got no more than a flicker of interest from Beth.

Inexorable as time would come the final night in the death-house, the final breakfast, never to be digested, then the keepers and the minister.

On the other side of the little green door would be assembled some medical men, some newspaper writers, in the death chamber with the chair.

No other furniture was there in the little brick house of one room save this awful chair of yellow oak with broad leather straps. There it stood, the sole article in the brightly varnished room of about twenty-five feet square, with walls of clean blue —a grim acolyte of modern, scientific death.

There were the wet electrodes that were to be fastened to the legs through slits in the trousers at the calves. Above was the pipe-like fixtures, like a gruesome helmet of leather, that fitted over the head, carrying the other electrode.

In the wall to the left toward the death-house was the door, on this side yellow—the threshold of the grave.

Back of the chair was the switch which let loose a lethal store of energy. Back of that the prison "morgue," where the body was to be taken.

Failed even that moment of melodrama. The Governor would not even commute the sentence to life imprisonment.

The switch, once, twice, the lights dim in all the prison buildings; once, twice, also, as the deadly current was diverted to death.

Beth sank to the floor by the little old chair. She, too, had come to know that this sudden dimming of the corridor lights and then their almost as sudden flaring up had a terrible meaning.

The men inside knew it. Hers was no less an agony than that of the men in the other curtained cells—more, if anything.

Beth had learned that when the lights grow dim at dawn in Sing Sing it means that the electric power has been borrowed for just that little while to send a body straining against the straps of the electric chair, snuffing out the life of a man.

Would that dimming of lights fill two graves instead of one?

Beth sank to the floor by the little old chair.

"Teddy!" she screamed.

Her golden curls seemed to cling lovingly to the white, unconscious face on which they had fallen.

Laddie jumped out of his sleep, every sense alert.

He licked Beth's face, then suddenly sat on his haunches and howled, howled dismally.

Suddenly again he was alert. Ears erect, eyes straining ahead, body tense in every muscle, every part of him still, every hair as if it were electrified, Laddie watched eagerly just back of Beth's chair.

He sniffed in the air, jumped as if he had received a command, and went back to the old hunting coat in the basket in the corner.

CHAPTER FOUR

CAME the last moments, the darkest hour just before dawn, the proverbial four o'clock in the morning when life ebbs to its lowest.

Ted waked with a start. A tired mind an anguished soul had succumbed at last to physical weakness. He sat up on his cot and gazed around bitterly, rubbing his eyes nervously so hard he could see flashes of fire in them. The crushing thought of his approaching death settled over him a mantle of melancholy, a mantle so enveloping, so heavy, that his head was touching the covers before he was aware of it.

"My last morning."

That will to live, the most tenacious thing in a sane man's life, that fevered clutching at threads of hope, made him jump out of bed in terror. He was alone, with the sweat of agony oozing from every pore. Hope! He shook his iron-barred door. No hope there. He could hear the guard hurrying down to his cell. Talk? Useless chatter

now. The only one he wanted to talk to was Beth these last few moments, and that was denied.

He crouched on his cot, cold and shivering. He didn't want to die. He had done nothing. Involuntarily, he put his arms up and crushed his covers to him. He imagined it was Beth. Tightly he held them to him.

The guard called: "All right?"

"All right," he answered heart-heavy.

"Your breakfast will come soon and the chaplain will visit you."

Now he knew. It wasn't hours he had to live, only minutes.

"Beth!" he screamed in his mental agony.

He could hear more steps coming up the corridor. Now there was the aroma of coffee, the smell of food. But there was no appetite. He looked at his table and thought. In the old days after a hike before breakfast with Laddie, how he could have devoured that food! Now it all looked and tasted alike. He saw it through a mist —the eggs, the bacon, hot rolls and orange, the coffee—all a disgusting mess.

The chaplain he liked. He listened to what was said to him. But his agony at the thought of going out and leaving Beth made him unable to concentrate. It is all right to talk of the future life and of angels. But a young man wants his sweetheart, now. The chaplain had his hand on his, was trying to comfort him.

Suddenly he heard a sound in the corridor. He grabbed the chaplain for support. They were coming for him.

He shook violently. Then with a last burst of will-power he stood alone, quiet. He would be a man at the last.

The steps advanced. Every step he stood straighter.

Then he heard a voice.

"I'm not too late; but what this last hour must have been!"

Through his mind filtered the thought: "That's not Beth's voice. That's Mary's voice. What does she want?"

The steps slowed up in front of his cell. His unseeing blurred eyes could just make out the compassionate face of Mary. She was waving something aloft.

"Teddy! A pardon—a full pardon—at last!"

He did not move. He could not. The door of his cell was opened wide with a bang against the cement wall. The keeper did it as if he were glad to let one poor devil go free.

"Teddy! It's Mary! Here's your pardon!"

She thrust it into his hands. The hands and the paper were miles away. He knew he felt something. But he had been through such an ordeal that he could not think.

Mary took his arm and shook him. He heard her talking to the Principal Keeper and others. "No, he doesn't need any medicine. He needs Beth. They need each other. Teddy!" she called sharply, "get out out of that trance! I want to take you to Beth. She doesn't want to see a ghost. She wants to see her man. Come; I motored down from Albany with this myself. It was only signed in the middle of the night. Beth doesn't know. Come—tell her—yourself."

"Beth," he repeated vacantly.

"Yes, Beth!" she shouted.

Slowly moisture gathered in his eyes, tears trickled down his cheeks. There were other tears, too, in the eyes of those about. There was a cheer from the other lifers. That brought him to earth.

"Yes, take me to Beth."

"That's the way to talk, Teddy!" Mary exclaimed. "Get him out of here—away from this cell!"

"Mary, am I free—really? How did it come about?" asked Teddy pitifully, hesitating.

"New evidence. I can't stop now. Think of Beth. We must get to Beth."

Teddy's eyes glistened, color flooded his prison-pale cheeks. It was so good to be a free man again.

A different Teddy Marbury climbed into Mary's roadster.

"I can't get there quick enough!" he cried eagerly, but with those pensive humble gestures acquired from months of prison confinement.

"They'll excuse you if you step on the gas, Miss Mannix," the Warden shouted as they were driving off.

Mary shot ahead, turned the corner.

"There it is, Teddy," she pointed up the hill.

Teddy looked up at the little house.

Mary wound her way up the hill.

"Wait till I see her, Teddy. She's all worn out." The car stopped. "I'll go in first, break it gently. The shock, you know; she's played out."

Beth was sitting at the table in the dining-room, her head on her arms, crying softly to herself.

"What is it, Beth?" called Mary.

"Oh, Mary, this is the morning Ted goes. You were not here. Laddie and I were crying it out together." Laddie put his nose on Beth's knee as if he understood.

"Poor dear Beth, what a friend you have been to Teddy." Mary put her arm about her friend. "Would you like to see Teddy once more?"

"Would they let me? Let me get my hat. I've been waiting for the dimming lights to tell me of the end."

"You don't need your hat, Beth." Mary looked her in the face to calm her. "Could you stand a great joy as well as you have stood a great sorow?"

Beth's eyes opened wide.

"Joy? There is only one joy for me now—to die and be with Teddy."

"Yes. But how would you like to live and be with Teddy?"

Beth searched her friend's face for a hopeful sign.

"Live—with Teddy? What do you mean?"

"Will you be a good child if I tell you?"

"Yes; please, tell me."

"If I called some one in from my roadster outside, what would you do?"

Mary took a step over to the door, opened it and waved. There was the sound of some one there. Beth looked startled.

"I heard you, Mary. 'What would she do?' Just this."

Teddy gathered the girl-wife in his arms and held her, her lips to his.

Laddie was crazy. He was barking and jumping furiously. No one noticed him. That did not suit Laddie. He calmly sat down on Teddy's feet, close as he could get, wagging his tail and looking up for recognition.

"But, Mary, how did you do it?" cried Beth breathlessly, still clinging to Teddy, half-laughing, half-crying.

"Well, I lost the case, both as detective and as lawyer. But in my heart there had always burned the determination, grim, set, irresistible, to win it. I had to work fast.

"Finally came the time when my operative that I put on the case, employed as a porter at the Marbury Works, found the missing link."

Teddy and Beth were all attention as Mary told of her porter-detective at the plant.

"There, in the cellar of the works, in a bale, we discovered a crumpled and torn letter of yours, Teddy, to Etta Craven." Mary unfolded it. "The very words showed your loyalty to Beth. It was begging Etta Craven to tell the truth to Beth about that ride into the city that night. I suppose you had forgotten that letter. Etta never would have said anything about it, anyhow."

"But what of that letter?" asked Teddy.

"What of that letter? Just this. It had been stolen from Etta by Jason. He threw it in the waste after he used it. The operative found it in the cellar where it had been baled with the other waste paper from the office and not yet disposed of.

"If you place the endorsement on the back of that check over the signature on this letter and hold them up to the light, you will see that they are identical.

"I found that I could superimpose this letter signature over the photographic copy of the endorsement, which I had. There, I had it at last. It was with that I went to the Governor, alone, again. I told him how the trial had hinged on it, that the district attorney had challenged us to produce one signature that would show the endorsement traced."

"Why didn't you tell, Mary?" asked Beth.

"I didn't dare say anything, raise any more false hopes. It seemed so many had been crushed."

"But," considered Teddy, "what made you look for this letter, in the first place, in the bales and bales of waste in the cellar?"

"The trump that was dealt me!" exclaimed Mary. "No, I ought rather to say it was like poker. It was as if I had asked for an entire new hand on the draw, five new cards. I got a straight flush. Toki, the Jap valet, Toki squealed."

"What?"

"Yes. You see, Toki knew too much. He had begun to collect from Jason—blackmail. It got too strong for Jason. But he stood the gaff. Then Etta found out, saw the money—some money going. That was too much for Etta—to lose money. She tried to have Toki deported. He came to me—and talked. That started me on the right track. I got my operative at work then, the best man I knew, at the works on Toki's tip."

"Then Toki had been spying on Jason?"

"Exactly. I knew the ten-thousand-dollar check with your endorsement was a forged endorsement as soon as Toki told me he had seen in his master's pocket one night a letter you had written to Etta.

"But the next step was also on a tip from Toki. It was forged by Jason to satisfy blackmail of Doctor McKillen over Etta Craven, once McKillen's wife."

"McKillen's wife?"

"Yes. They were a pair of adventurers. Jason married her. Then there was a threat of alienation. The proceeds of the check was to buy that off for a time, but really to 'get' you. You see, I was getting it by this time, step by step, following out Toki's tips—how Jason killed your Uncle Matthew because of the will, because of the threats, the scandal, the ruin that faced him, the hatred and jealousy of you."

"Jason!" Beth repeated the name, her intuition shining, justified, in her face.

"Yes. Jason had been at the Manor only a few minutes before Teddy came. He it was who had put the poison in the bottle, in the glass. Then he fled to the city in his car. He framed up that alibi with Toki, by perjury. You see, what really happened was this: Etta Craven knew of the will by your Uncle Matthew. She called Jason, and told him of the reconciliation about to take place. Jason hurried out in his car. He thought out the scheme of substituting the poison in that bottle Beth had brought. So your Uncle Matthew was killed. Luck, everything, played into the hands of those against you. Really, if you had that night only taken it for granted that all was right between Uncle Matthew and you and had given the alarm immediately, you and Beth could have faced out all the direct and circumstantial evidence in the world."

Quickly Mary told of Jason and the underworld woman, Etta, about the new will, cutting Jason and Teddy down to one-third each, and putting a third in for Beth.

Jason had murdered rather than give up the difference between a half and a third. He planned that Teddy would be held responsible and he, by contesting the will, would get Teddy's half also. Then, with Beth out, the whole fortune might be his to satisfy the woman and buy off his tormentor, McKillen.

"Etta Craven knows where that new will is. Jason does not. She has not destroyed it. She keeps it hanging over his head like the sword of Damocles, that he may come across and keep coming across—play fair with her. Otherwise she would 'find' the will."

"Where is it? Did you learn?" It was almost too much to hope, thought Teddy.

"Yes. You remember, Beth, where the wing of the Manor is on a different level from the main part, the step down?" Beth nodded. "Well, under that step is a secret hiding place. It is there," Mary answered.

"And you learned that also from Toki?"

"No. I had another operative, a girl. She got into the Manor as cook. My cook-detective at Marbury Manor learned and told me over long distance. I did not go; could not go. I had to see the Governor. Besides, on the signature in the letter and other evidence, he had decided to sign the pardon."

"There is just one thing that must be done, then," exclaimed Teddy. "Look in Marbury Manor for that will—quick!"

It was not many minutes before Mary had the prosecutor on the wire, as she mentally calculated the distance and the time it would take to get there.

"I shall be at Marbury Manor at ten," she

concluded as she shot the astounding news over the wire. "I request that you be there to take the evidence of a felony that must be presented to the next grand jury. I demand it, in the name of the man who must be cleared. Please bring along the forged check, the original, also. And, above all, say nothing about it—to a soul."

In the town they chose a closed car with curtains that could be drawn.

Mary had the driver of the car proceed slowly near the Manor, making sure they were not to be ahead of the district attorney by too many minutes.

At the porte-cochère she left Teddy in the car, while she and Beth entered with Laddie, just as the car of the prosecutor was swinging up the drive.

Etta and Jason received them with scant courtesy. Beth was ready with her excuse.

"Just once, before I go away, I want to see the old Manor. I was so happy here—once."

The district attorney had come in by this time. Mary gave Etta and Jason no chance.

"You have brought the forged check?" she greeted the prosecutor. "Please, will you be so kind as to hold this letter and that check to the light? I think you dared me during the trial to offer something that superimposed on that endorsement?"

"You—you are right. I'm—I'm afraid—a mistake has been made."

"I found that in a bale of your waste-paper, Jason Marbury," nodded Mary, holding up Teddy's letter. "Now, I should like to see the room in the west wing once occupied by Beth Drayton."

Jason, livid, looked at Etta, not understanding this last request, as he had understood the check all too well. It was now Etta's turn to pale.

"That's all been done over; my maid occupies it," objected Etta, with a fearful glance at Jason. "Besides, by what authority are you here? Have you a search-warrant to enter this house?"

"Search-warrant?" returned Mary, then to Beth: "Send Laddie—to the car."

As Laddie bounded back again into the room ahead of Teddy the prosecutor rubbed his eyes. Jason cringed. Etta was in hysterics.

"Take it away. Take it away. I'll tell the truth!" wailed Etta, clutching at a chair, as the prosecutor sidled over between Jason and the door.

"The truth has been told already," returned Mary in the same cold tone. "The Governor signed Teddy's pardon one o'clock last night. It will all be in the afternoon papers. Teddy, will you lead the way to that secret hiding place?"

Teddy did not wait. He started up toward the second floor.

Teddy reached down and felt of the riser and the tread of the step between the two levels of the house and the wing. The riser pushed back, revealing a secret compartment.

He put his hand in and drew out several papers. He passed them to the district attorney after a glance.

"The top one seems to be the missing will of my Uncle Matthew Marbury, hidden here by Etta Craven, I am told."

Laddie gave five short barks as he leaped at Teddy's hands. But it was Beth who found her way to Teddy's arms.

Apart, Mary smiled to herself her quiet smile. She had won her case, saved a life, reunited two lovers.

The district attorney shook his head as he looked at the two new felons now on his hands, then at Teddy and Beth.

A grim smile stole over the district attorney's face. "Kelly! Ryan!" he called.

The hall-door opened, and as two of his detectives strode in he pointed at the cringing Jason and Etta.

"Arrest these people!" he exclaimed harshly, and as the officers' hands came down heavily on the terrified pair, he added:

"They are the guilty ones. Ted Marbury has been pardoned, but, believe me, he only escaped dying for their crime by the breadth of a hair."

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CHAPTER ONE

"IS Mr. Le Beau in?"

Jason, the portly butler of the Le Beau household, who had answered the door, dropped his usual mask of hauteur and appeared just a trifle agitated as he realized who the caller was, and stepped awkwardly aside to let him enter.

Henry Bryson, who had come in reply to an earnest telephone message from his friend, Le Beau, barely noticed these trivial perturbations on the part of the old servant, yet his mind did record them away back in its subconscious self. The impression was a fleeting one, and almost immediately passed from his memory as he stepped across the threshold and handed his hat and stick to the butler.

"Yes, sir; he's waiting for you in the library," replied the old man. "And he's very anxious to see you to-night."

Once more Bryson imagined that there was something slightly out of the ordinary in the way the butler spoke and acted. But again that thought at once left him.

"Is he alone?"

"Yes, sir. Step right this way, sir."

Bryson was announced and shown into the library. As the door closed behind him the old butler shrank back into a shadowy recess of the hall and stood there, agitated and breathless, leaning slightly forward, every muscle tense and rigid. Awe and anticipation seemed to dominate him. A little distance down the hall the grandfather clock suddenly chimed the hour of ten, sending its contrasting notes of music through the silence of the house.

The old butler started, then shivered.

Incoherent voices could be heard as they issued from behind the closed library door. A creepy feeling went through Jason's nerves. He felt as if something terrible was about to happen.

Bryson's and Le Beau's voices behind the door grew louder and louder. Jason, pale as death, found a clammy sweat breaking out on his brow, and then Le Beau's voice mounted into notes of fury. Then there came a shot!

"My God, Bryson, you've murdered me!" exclaimed Le Beau's anguished voice.

Next there was a cry of surprise and horror.

A few moments later the servants, headed by Jason, rushed into the library, where they found Bryson, white-faced, terrified and trembling, standing near a chair in which the lifeless body of his host reclined, limp in death. There was an ugly hole in the center of his forehead. From all appearances Le Beau had been shot to death from the front. A large revolver was lying on the floor more than ten feet from the table in front of which the dead man had been seated.

Jason, together with three servants, comprised the household. They were the only people to enter the library before the arrival of the police. In reply to their jumbled questions, Bryson could give but one answer.

"I'll be accused of murder; but I didn't shoot him. Before God, I'm innocent!"

"Call the police, somebody," said the butler, who now became the most collected of them all.

Bryson began to pace the floor, wringing his hands and mumbling jerky protestations of innocence. He did this until the police came.

An expert in the art of "Third Degree," who happened to be with the police, took

Jason to one side and spoke to him for a few moments in a low tone, after which he came back to where Bryson was standing and began to fire a broadside of harsh, merciless questions at the bewildered young man.

"So you had it out hot and heavy with the murdered man just before he was shot?"

"Yes, we quarreled, but I didn't kill him."

"Now, never mind what you didn't do. If you didn't, then who did?"

"I don't know."

"You lie! You know who killed him. You know damn well you did. He couldn't have done it himself, as the revolver was found over ten feet away from him. No man can shoot himself in the head and then throw the gun that distance. Do you get that?"

"Yes, but I didn't shoot him. I didn't even offer to harm him."

"Cut the bull! Didn't you say, 'Damn you, Le Beau, I'll kill you for that!' just before you fired the shot?"

"I didn't fire any shot—I didn't say that," stammered the confused young man.

"Tell that to the judge," jeered the detective with a twisted smile. "You can't hand us that line of bunk and get away with it!"

"I'm telling you the truth; I didn't kill him."

The detective sneered and then turned to where Jason was standing.

"Say, you," he ordered, "come over here."

Jason obeyed, and the detective roared:

"Where were you when Le Beau and this man were together in here to-night?"

"I was outside in the hall, sir."

"Did you hear this fellow threaten Le Beau?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did he say?"

"I heard him say, 'Damn you, Le Beau, I'll kill you for that!"

"When was that?"

"Just before the shot was fired."

The detective turned triumphantly to the accused man.

"Well, what do you say to that, eh?" he sneered. "Does that settle you? Do you still claim that you didn't kill the man?"

"I didn't kill him!" cried Bryson. "The butler lies! I didn't shoot Le Beau. I swear to God I'm innocent!" There was a ring of utter hopelessness in his voice.

"I reckon you'll sing another song after a few days in the sweat-box," retorted the detective heartlessly as he turned to an assistant. "Put the irons on him, Bill. He goes along. He'll get the chair as sure as I'm living. Come along, old man."

When the cuffs were snapped on Bryson's wrists he staggered as if about to fall. Then he looked imploringly towards the butler. Jason was standing imperturbably by the table. Bryson addressed him brokenly:

"For God's sake, tell them you were mistaken," he begged. "Tell them that I did not say such a thing. You know I didn't."

But the old man turned away his face as from an unclean thing.

"I'm not mistaken. I told the truth."

Bryson recoiled as if he had received a blow. Then the detective took him roughly by the arm and led him from the house.

CHAPTER TWO

THE evidence brought out at the coroner's inquest only served to tighten the noose already about Bryson's neck, and every circumstance added to his apparent guilt. The most damning of all the testimony was that offered by Bryson himself, who, although informed that he could not be forced to testify in a case wherein he was the accused, nevertheless insisted in telling everything that he knew in a straightforward manner. He admitted having had a quarrel with Le Beau over his fianceé, for whose hand Le Beau had been a rival, but he would not admit that he threatened to kill him. The evidence of the butler was false. He had never before seen the revolver that was found in the room. He also admitted that he had heard Le Beau exclaim, "My God, Bryson, you've murdered me!" but that took place as he was about to leave the room.

The revolver had been examined, and one exploded chamber was found. The bullet extracted from the murdered man's head proved to be of the same calibre as that of the revolver. The idea of suicide was at once dismissed. The lack of powder stains clearly showed the impossibility of self-destruction.

So the police concluded that Bryson, thrown into a fit of rage by some remark that LeBeau had made about his fiancée, suddenly turned upon the man and shot him.

And as is always the case, such a tragedy of love, rivalry and death received wide publicity through the newspapers. In common with the police and the district attorney's office, the public looked upon the case against Bryson as an open-and-shut affair. The grand jury had but to indict him; he would be given a trial, and then the man would receive his just punishment.

So they had it figured out. But on the day following Bryson's arrest the case as reported by the newspapers was fully read and digested by Sidney Layton, a free-lance sleuth, who, having inherited a fortune, had fortunately found himself in a position where he could freely devote himself to a favorite hobby of his, and that was to dabble in mysterious murder cases.

But Layton's aim as a detective was entirely different from that of other man-hunters, for his ambition was not to prove an accused man guilty, but to establish his innocence, if he seemed guiltless. And very naturally his peculiar attitude toward crime made Layton a confirmed enemy of all circumstantial evidence.

This strange detective had established quite a reputation for himself, although, as might be expected, he was given little credit by the newspapers, who always made sport of his endeavors. In the eyes of the regular police and detective forces he was considered a huge joke. He was on good terms with most of the police officials, but they had little use for his method of working.

Even Chief of Detectives Westfall, blunt and outspoken as he was, found a great deal of diversion in his dealings with Layton. But, as he liked him, he often went out of his way to let him in on some of the cases that came to the department's attention.

Sidney Layton was present at the inquest that was held over Le Beau, and listened intently to all the evidence that was brought out against Bryson. In spite of the fact that everything went against the accused man, and that it hardly looked as if there was anything for him to do except to plead guilty, Layton turned to Pip Seward, a young fellow who usually helped him in his work, and asked:

"Well, what do you think—guilty or not guilty?"

"I'll say guilty."

"You're wrong!" exploded Layton, driving his fist into the palm of his hand. "That man Bryson is no more of a murderer than you are. I've listened to the story of the crime and watched the accused man, and I have formed a few ideas of my own regarding the matter. I'm going to go right downtown, call on Westfall, and ask him to give me a chance to see what I can do about clearing Bryson. And if he gives me half a chance I'll establish his innocence, too."

Layton made haste to reach the detective headquarters.

"You might as well say that the killer has the hemp around his neck already," was the brutal way in which Chief Westfall put it when Layton asked what he thought about the matter. "I don't see the sense of even a trial in a case like this. I guess the guy hasn't got much brains, or he'd plead guilty to the whole shooting match, and save himself and everybody else a heap of trouble."

"Why don't you give the fellow at least a fighting chance?" remonstrated Layton. Doesn't the law say that a man must be looked upon as innocent until a jury says he's otherwise? As I've told you a dozen times before, I wouldn't hang a flea on all the circumstantial evidence in the world. It seems to me that some effort should be made to clear Bryson just for the sake of appearances, if nothing else."

Chief Westfall frowned.

"Yes," he grumbled past his big cigar, "and then have the whole city sit on my neck for letting a murderer get by with it, instead of soaking him for the limit. Is

that what you're after? Why, this man Bryson is as guilty as sin. There's nothing else to it. Now, just look at the case. He can't say a word in his own defense. Every time he opens his trap he pulls the rope tighter around his neck. You don't want us to let a murderer off when he almost pleads guilty, do you? And then you also have the evidence of Jason, which alone convicts the man. What more do you want?"

Layton tugged at an ear.

"The chief trouble with you detectives in a murder case like this is that you see only the big, outstanding facts, and at once judge and condemn accordingly," Layton retorted with a note of anger in his voice.

Chief Westfall shifted his fat cigar to the other corner of his mouth and smiled indulgently. He liked these arguments with Layton. They were away from the beaten path.

"And the chief trouble with you is that there's something the matter with your attic," he answered with a guffaw. "You're full of hokum. Why, damn it, man, what more do you want? Here we have a murder committed. The murderer and his victim are the only ones in the room at the time of the shooting. The revolver is found ten feet away from the corpse. The murderer practically admits that he's the guilty one, and yet you have the crust to come to me and say that the man isn't getting a square deal. Why, you're crazy!"

But Layton only smiled good-naturedly and turned his penetrating eyes upon the chief.

"You're pretty tough on me, chief," he replied quietly. "Still, I really can't blame you. You have nothing back of you but the brain of an unreasoning man, anyway. That's why you talk that way. But let's cut out these personalities and discuss the merits of the case."

"Go to it," said the chief with a hearty laugh.

"Well, then," continued the other, "it is my firm belief that in the great excitement that follows every sensational murder only the glaring, outstanding events are noticed by the investigators. Probably a dozen or more minor details, if analyzed, might prove of great importance, but they are not even thought of. That's why I'm a crank when it comes to so-called insignificant trifles. I make them my hobby. In a few words, my theory is this: That in every combination of circumstances there are some obscure, dormant facts, trifles, which if brought into the light might develop into extenuations. And so I'd like to have you give me a chance to try my hand at this case and see what I can do about it. What do you say, chief? Any objections?"

The chief pondered for a moment.

"Well, I can't say why I shouldn't let you have your fling," he replied. "But I don't think you can do anything to clear the man."

"Maybe not," answered Layton, highly elated. "But hang your circumstantial evidence!" he went on, falling back into a pet subject. "Do you know, chief, that, according to statistics I have compiled, two thousand nine hundred and sixty-three innocent men have died for the crimes of others within the past fifty years?"

"Oh, to the deuce with your figures!" growled the chief, taking out his watch and rising from his chair. "Go on and see what you can do with your theory about trifles." And, reaching for his telephone, he added: "I'll notify the jail warden to let you have a crack at the prisoner, and then you can do whatever you see fit. I'll see you later."

CHAPTER THREE

LAYTON made his way to the jail. The turnkey admitted him into the cell of the accused, and then, according to instructions, withdrew and left Layton with the prisoner.

Bryson was seated on the edge of a cot in the far corner of the cell, utterly dejected, his head in his hands. He did not even appear to notice the entrance of the detective. Layton went straight over to Bryson and sat down beside him. Even then the prisoner did not move or pay any attention to his visitor. For a long moment Layton said nothing, but simply regarded

the accused with an expression of compassion.

"Mr. Bryson!"

It was Layton speaking at last, and the slouched figure raised its head and revealed a face haggard and worn with worry and loss of sleep. His entire appearance mirrored despair.

Layton introduced himself and gave his occupation.

"I'm a free-lance sleuth," he said, in a light, cheerful vein. "I go in for detective work occasionally, just for the fun of it. Only my specialty is to prove innocent men not guilty, instead of the reverse."

Bryson raised his head, brushed back his rumpled hair, and regarded the detective suspiciously. Then he stared belligerently at him.

"What do you want with me?" he demanded hoarsely.

Layton answered him with a smile of friendliness.

"Chief Westfall and his clique of sleuths think you're as good as convicted. But I told him that I didn't agree with this idea, and I am here to tell you the same thing."

For the first time since his arrest the face of Bryson lit up noticeably. But only for an instant.

"Oh, I see! You're only another detective!" he said bitterly. "They have all been hounding me ever since my arrest. For God's sake, why don't they let up? I feel myself going to pieces. I don't know what I'll say next. Before long I'll be saying I murdered the man."

"But I'm going to prove an exception, I tell you," replied Layton. "I'm not here to badger you. I come as a friend."

"I see," said the prisoner sarcastically. "A new system of the 'Third Degree.' Well, go ahead and cross-examine me."

Layton laid his hand on Bryson's shoulder.

"All mistrust aside now, Mr. Bryson, do I really look the part of a bully?"

Again the prisoner's face lit up, this time more markedly than before, as he regarded the strange man before him with hopeful interest

"Well, no," he said. "But what do you really want?"

"A chance to prove that you are an innocent man," replied Layton. "Westfall thinks I'm a nut, and hopes to have a laugh at me because I'm getting in on your case."

"But what makes you so sure that I'm innocent?" asked Bryson.

"Your appearance of genuine innocence. My hunches are usually the right sort," replied the detective. "You see, I consider myself a good deal of a psychologist. I specialize in the study of the human mind. I sat through the whole inquest and watched you closely and carefully. And I'm certain that you are not really guilty of the crime. In the first place, you didn't strike me as a cold-blooded murderer, and in the second, you don't look like a fool. I don't think any one but a fool would commit a murder on the eve of his marriage. And in the third place, I haven't a bit of time for circumstantial evidence."

Layton leaned forward and laid a hand on the other man's knee.

"Now tell me," the detective continued, "what do you think of Le Beau's death that hasn't been mentioned yet? I've heard all that the other side said, and now I'd like to hear your story. But remember this, I'm taking it for granted that you are an innocent man, and I want you to place all your confidence in me, and tell me just what you think about the whole affair."

Bryson gazed at the detective earnestly. He had been watching Layton with varying emotions. In the beginning there had been a genuine mistrust pictured on his face that had by degrees been dispelled as Layton gradually won him over.

"You are the first decent person who has spoken to me since my arrest," said Bryson, with unconcealed emotion. "The police have been hammering at me incessantly since the murder was committed. If they keep on with this system they'll drive me crazy. That evidence of Jason, the butler, was the most unkind blow of all. I can't understand why he should want to swear my life away. My God, I can't stand this strain much longer. You see——"

His voice quivered and broke.

Layton was studying him with penetrating eyes. His first step in a case like this was to bring his psychological intuition into play. This, in connection with his original methods of procedure; is what eventually made him such a remarkable man in the field of crime and mystery. His knowledge of human nature; his ability to lay stress on trifles; the ease with which he insinuated himself into the confidence of others. All this helped to bring about success where others failed.

"Listen," he said, laying a soothing hand on Bryson's shoulder. "I wish you would go over the whole situation with me from the beginning. I may have to ask you some questions that will appear ridiculous, questions that will seem to have nothing to do with the matter in hand. My object is to prompt your mind to recall such matters as you may have forgotten during the excitement of the past few days. But let's begin at the beginning, and we will call the beginning, as far as it concerns your case, when you first came to see Le Beau in answer to his telephone call. Who was it that answered your ring and opened the door for you?"

"Jason, the butler."

"Did he appear to you the same as ever when he opened the door?"

"Yes, sir."

"You're quite sure that there wasn't some little detail about him that seemed out of the ordinary?"

Bryson shook his head.

"Listen," said Layton earnestly, bending closer than ever toward the prisoner. "Can't you recall some little move on Jason's part, or some expression, or anything else that you considered too insignificant to remember, or which, even if you did remember, you might consider too insignificant to mention?"

"No."

"No unusual words?" persisted Layton.

"None whatever."

"Or a queer look?"

"Nothing."

But Layton did not give up.

"You say that Jason is trying to swear your life away, that his testimony is false. Now, if this is true, he must have known what was going to happen at the time he showed you into Le Beau's home on the eve of the murder. Now, a man who is about to ruin another must be very cool and audacious indeed if he doesn't want to act a bit suspicious when suddenly brought face to face with his prospective victim. For that reason I must ask you again to think, and this time to think hard, in order to recall how Jason appeared to you the very moment when he opened the door that evening."

"I can think of nothing——" began Bryson. But suddenly he broke off and stared at the floor, as though struggling with his memory. And then slowly from the mists of his mind there came a recollection of Jason's face as it appeared when he had shown Bryson into the hall—that expression of relaxed dignity that had been hardly noticeable at the time, but which had nevertheless made some sort of an impression on his mind. It had suddenly come back to him now, thanks to Layton's powerful promptings.

"Well, yes," he said slowly. "I believe I do recall something that you might consider rather unusual, although I don't think it amounts to much."

Layton's face lit up with expectancy, and he leaned forward in suspense.

"When Jason let me in that night," Bryson continued, "he seemed somewhat taken aback just for a second or so, although I might have been mistaken."

Layton's face wore a strange look. A train of new ideas was evidently forming in his mind. He gripped Bryson's arm almost fiercely.

"You were a frequent caller at Le Beau's place, were you not?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Did Jason ever appear out of countenance on any former occasion?"

"Never. He always made me marvel at the correct and precise manner in which he carried himself. That is why I recall quite distinctly now that he seemed somewhat off his dignity for a second or two when he first saw me."

"That's the stuff!" exclaimed Layton excitedly. "Now we're getting somewhere. Can you recall anything else that he did? Think hard. Can you remember anything else out of the ordinary?"

Bryson again relapsed into deep thought.

"Why, yes, I believe I can. When Jason announced me, there seemed to be an unnatural inflection in his voice."

"Anything else?" queried Layton eagerly.

"No. I'm sure that's all I noticed about Jason. And I'm afraid that doesn't amount to much."

But Layton was all enthusiasm now.

"You're greatly mistaken," he said. "It really amounts to a good deal. I think it will lead to discoveries that may make you a free man. It prompts me to believe that the butler, Jason, knew at the time when he showed you in that you would be arrested for the murder of Le Beau. He knew what was going to happen in the library that evening. And for that reason his mind was preoccupied. Instead of thinking of his duties as butler, as was his habit, he was thinking about you and Le Beau, and God knows what else. But let's go a step further. Do you recall anything unusual that took place afterwards? Try to recall some trifles."

And again Bryson pondered, this time more clearly and more hopefully.

"Yes, I do," he said slowly, after a few minutes of deep reflection. "Just before Le Beau seated himself at the table he seemed very particular about the position of the chair. He moved it twice, just a little each time, once slightly to the right and then just a bit forward. Of course all this seems unimportant, but it appears strange to me, now, that he should have paid such particular attention to those little details at a time when he was in such a state of temper."

"And what did he do when he sat down?" demanded Layton.

"He seemed to be staring at something on the wall opposite him."

Layton could contain himself no longer.

"Good!" he shouted, springing to his feet. "I believe I see the whole thing." He seized Bryson by the arm. "I'm glad you remembered those things. They are the most valuable clues in the whole case. I must see Chief Westfall at once and get his permission to make some investigations. Prepare yourself for an agreeable surprise," said Layton as he hurried away.

CHAPTER FOUR

LAYTON'S assistant, Seward, was at his home when he received a telephone call from the detective.

"That you, Pip? Listen. Go to Harrison's department store and get one of those French lay-figures of a man that they have on sale there. Then get a taxi and beat it down to Le Beau's house as quick as you can. Something doing."

Half an hour later Pip rang the front doorbell of Le Beau's house. Jason, the butler, pale and cringing like a coward, ushered him into the library. Layton was there, but no one else was about. Pip knew from experience that it was quite useless to ask questions just then. Without a word Layton took the lay-figure from Pip's arms and placed it into the chair that had been occupied by Le Beau at the time of his death, moving it a little this way and a little that way. Likewise the lay-figure. Then stepping a few feet back he lined up the head of the model with a certain part of the opposite wall.

"Ready," he said finally.

"What's up?" queried Pip, somewhat puzzled.

"Walk toward the door," commanded Layton.

"What's the big idea?"

"Do as I ordered and you'll see."

Pip obeyed. He had almost reached the door, when the report of a revolver shot rang out. Pip whirled around and found Layton bending over the lay-figure, making an examination of its head. No revolver was in sight.

"I've got him cleared!" he exclaimed.

"Who?"

"Bryson."

"What did you do?" asked Pip.

"Tell you later. Get into the taxi, hustle down to the Detective Headquarters, and tell Chief Westfall to fetch Bryson here and come back as quick as possible. Tell him Layton has a surprise for him. Give him to understand it's very important, and that I'll take all the responsibility."

Pip was instantly on his way. Fifteen minutes later he delivered Layton's message to Chief Westfall.

"What is that fellow up to now?" asked the Chief. "Is he trying to make a jackass out of me?"

"Who knows? You never can tell," answered Pip with a grin.

The Chief pondered for a few moments.

"Well, I'm game. Just a minute and I'll send for Bryson."

A few minutes afterward they entered the waiting taxi and were driven away.

When the trio arrived at Le Beau's library they found Layton pacing the floor impatiently. As soon as he caught sight of Westfall he smiled.

"Well, Chief," he began, "I'm now going to show you why the prisoner didn't plead guilty to the whole shooting-match as you thought he should have to."

Chief Westfall scowled defiantly.

"Go to it, Layton," he said. "If you've got anything to clear your man, come out with it."

In response to this challenge Layton stepped up to the dummy that still reclined in the chair and pointed to a hole in its forehead.

"Now look here," he said, as he placed a piece of cardboard over the hole in the dummy's head. "Watch this closely for just a minute."

Pip, Chief Westfall and Bryson, the latter more anxious and puzzled than the other two, stood close by while Layton reached under the table. An instant later a loud report reverberated through the house.

The Chief and his prisoner gave a start. Layton grinned and pointed to the piece of cardboard that he had fastened upon the forehead of the figure, which now showed a round hole such as is usually made by a .38 calibre revolver bullet.

"Do you see that?" he pointed out. "This is the way Le Beau got the bullet in his head that night. And of course you don't see any revolver around here either, do you?" He looked questioningly at the three spectators who stood at one side with expressions of surprise on their faces. Finally Chief Westfall spoke:

"But who in thunder fired that shot?"

"I did," replied Layton.

"How did you do it?"

"I fired it the same way as Le Beau did on the night of his death."

"What? Do you mean to tell me that Le Beau committed suicide?"

"Precisely. He shot himself in spite of all the circumstantial evidence the police brought out at the inquest."

"But why? And how?"

"It was like this," began Layton. "When I went to see Bryson I was determined to discover some particulars, which, though insignificant in themselves, would nevertheless throw a different light upon the whole case. Among other things, Bryson told me that Le Beau, just prior to the tragedy, had moved his chair closer to the table and cast a strange look toward the wall in front of him. Well, that gave me the clue that Le Beau might have shot himself. Some mechanical device, I said to myself. A madman's scheme. Le Beau, seeing that he couldn't marry the woman he loved, decided to spoil Bryson's prospects by committing suicide in such a way as to cause Bryson to be found guilty of his murder. As soon as I got through talking with Bryson I came here and made an investigation. And this is what I found."

With these words he raised the covering of the table and exposed to the view of the onlookers a series of wires that ran along one of the table legs. He also pointed to a small electric switch.

"These wires," continued Layton, "run under the carpet over to the wall, up under one of the panels, and are connected with the trigger of a revolver of the same calibre as the one found on the floor after the suicide."

Layton walked to the opposite wall, reached out to the apparently smooth sur-

face, and shoved aside one of the panels, exposing the barrel of a .38 calibre revolver.

"This automatic device of the madman," he went on, "was not only constructed to discharge the revolver so as to hit a certain mark, but it also caused the panel to move back into its place after the shot was fired, thus hiding the weapon."

Chief Westfall stood by, dazed by the clearness of the explanation.

"It's all off," he admitted. "Couldn't convict Bryson in a hundred years. Not a jury in the world would find him guilty after seeing this contraption. It's a clean-cut alibi."

The face of Bryson was flushed with unspeakable joy. Pip looked admiringly at Layton. The latter, who was not entirely lacking in humor, smiled tantalizingly at Chief Westfall.

For a minute the Chief gnawed his lips as he eyed Layton. It was a bitter dose of medicine for the veteran detective to swallow, but he took it as gracefully as possible. He held out his hand to Layton.

"Shake, old man," he said. "You win. But I want a little more light. How about the testimony of Jason, the butler? And how did that other revolver get on the floor? These things have got to be explained, you know."

"That's easy," replied Layton. "Le Beau 'planted' the revolver. It was a neat move, and forged the strongest link in the chain of circumstantial evidence against Bryson. As to Jason, I had a confidential chat with him just before your arrival. When he saw the mechanical device had been discovered he broke down and confessed. He admitted that he had lied, because Le Beau warned him that if he didn't he might be accused of the crime himself."

Layton paused for a moment and drew his lips together.

"And again I repeat that I wouldn't hang a flea on all the circumstantial evidence in the world."

HOW CROOKS WORK

IT was on an afternoon in one of the big candy stores. Business was dull and the soda "expert" and the young lady cashier were chatting together in the rear of the room.

While I was looking over the display of chocolates and bonbons with a view to selecting a suitable package to take home to the children a well-dressed gentleman strolled in. He passed along the display on the counters, and came to the back of the store where he asked the price of some article which he did not buy. As he went toward the door he looked back over his shoulder to see if the coast was clear, deftly whisked one of the boxes of chocolate between the folds of his newspaper and then passed slowly through the door out into the street.

I recently got a check cashed at a bank at Fifth avenue and Twentieth street, Manhattan, and walked over a short block to Broadway where I took a downtown car. I had in my right-hand trousers pocket seven ten-dollar bills and a check for nine dollars. It was the time of the afternoon rush and I was squeezed in between the doors and the cash box. While I was trying to deposit my nickel some one suddenly gave me a violent push and I was thrown against a young man in a brown suit standing just behind.

"It's a pretty tight squeeze here," I remarked.

"Yes," he said, "I think I'll be getting out of it." And "get out" he did at the next corner. I felt a presentiment that something had happened and at the first opportunity I felt for my "roll." It was gone! I stopped payment of the check, but I am still mourning the loss of the seven tens.

A Bit of Psychology

By CHARLES C. WATSON

THE time was a Sunday morning. The clock struck nine as Greenfield left his boarding-house to walk to the corner for a paper.

He was back in his room, feet propped on the windowsill, a cigar in his mouth going full blast like an open fireplace on a windy night, all within ten minutes.

A startling headline on the front page had caused him to hurry home.

STATE BANK HELD UP

LONE MAN DISAPPEARS AFTER STEALING $40,000 AT SHARPSVILLE

Yesterday afternoon, at 12.45, the paying-teller and two clerks in the Sharpsville State Bank were held up at a pistol's point by a masked bandit, who got away with forty thousand dollars. He forced them to pile the money into a leather bag which he made one of the clerks rake out of a corner. When it had been filled he backed to the door and went out, closing it after him. The door had big, fancy handles, through which he put a slab of wood about twelve inches long. A car was waiting at the curb, into which he threw the bag filled with bills and calmly drove off.

Several men who saw the car drive away say the bandit acted calmly and naturally.

The officials of the bank figured that the hold-up man had studied the habits of the employees and knew that from 12.30 until 1:15 there were but three employees in the bank building. The other five clerks all went to lunch at this time. The streets are bare of people usually, too, at this hour for the same reason.

The State Police were called in to trace the robber, and are reported to have valuable clues to the man who perpetrated the hold-up.

An arrest is to be made shortly.

Greenfield pursed his lips when he finished.

"Great heavens," he thought, "a lone stick-up man—forty thousand berries for five minutes' work—and here I am broke, out of a job, and none in sight. And a guy like this, with a cast-iron nerve and a cast-iron gun, makes away with forty thousand dollars."

He smoked in silence, rolling the cigar between his lips, as he sat contemplating the tips of his shoes.

Then he glanced again at the paper, and his eyes fell on a photograph of the bank. The entrance was at the corner of the building, facing diagonally across the street. The high steps were flanked by wide columns from the eaves to a point equal to the top step. This level was solid stone and about three feet wide on each side of the steps. It was an effective barrier to any one except those who stood directly in front of the door. He nodded his head as he saw the simplicity of the matter.

"Broke, no job, hold-up, lone man, $40,000, State Police, clues, arrest. Bunk!" he snorted. "That guy will get away, or my name isn't John Greenfield."

He read the article again.

"Sharpsville—good name," he murmured. "That's seventy miles from here. I could go to Taunton, then to Sharpsville by trolley. U-m-m! I'm almost tempted to do it. I could buy a Colt .45 and a bandanna in this town, and I'd be all set. I'll have to get some money somewhere—and I don't care how I get it!"

His feet came to the floor with a thump. He had made a decision. Rancor and indignation were in his voice as he muttered to himself. He had worked on the

Chronicle for a year. It was the local daily. Just out of college, he was able to get a job. Yet his work was no sinecure. His education meant little when it came to figuring it as an asset in reporting. He knew nothing of the ways and means to get news, where there was apparently no news to be had. He had been compelled to work his way through the college; that in itself was enough to discourage any one. But Greenfield had persevered. When he graduated and went to Morgan for a job he was given to understand he would have to make good. He had done this, but it was a tremendous task in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties. Then one night there came a particular piece of news over the wires. It was the "dog-watch," between twelve and four in the morning. He got the facts and dashed for the elevator door. On the pavement he hesitated, looking this way and that for a taxi. As luck would have it, he found none until he had walked to the railroad station, which was several blocks distant.

With the promise of a good-sized extra tip, the driver hit it up all the way to the scene of the accident. He was in time. Everything was just as the thing had occurred.

A young girl stood off to one side as a doctor bandaged a broken arm. He learned she was too excited to sit down. *She* was the reason he had come. He wanted to get her alone, so he waited until the doctor had left her. When he did, Greenfield approached the girl and told her who he was, and that he came from the *Chronicle*.

"Oh," she cried, starting back. "Does—does this have to be published?"

He explained that it would.

She only shook her head. Then she broke down, cried and admitted the whole thing. First she told her name, saying she was the daughter of Daniel Young. Greenfield was startled. He knew, of course, that Young had a daughter, but he didn't know she was so young and beautiful as this girl. To explain further, Young was the leader of the politicians who were antagonistic to the *Chronicle*. Young's paper was the *Observer*. Neither wore "clean clothes." Underhand tricks were their stock-in-trade, and often mud had been thrown by each—and when mud is thrown some one usually gets dirty. So Greenfield listened closely while Miriam Young told him how the accident had happened.

"In itself the accident is nothing," she cried, "but to think it had to happen when I was in the car, and couldn't help myself. I was standing on the station platform in Morgantown, waiting for a train to bring me home, when a car came down the street, stopped at the platform, and a man got out. He walked to a bench and sat down. The driver noticed me standing there and recognized me. I knew him well, and there was nothing wrong about his actions that would cause me to refuse his invitation to get in and ride home. I saw others in the tonneau, and thought they were friends of his from town, so I didn't hesitate. I got in, and we hadn't gone very far before I learned they were all intoxicated. I tried to reason with the driver, who is George Tucker, but he laughed and sped all the faster. We were going about fifty miles an hour when, on a cross-roads, another car turned in after us and started to race. It was terrible. Tucker was grinning, and the two girls, who are now dead, and the two men were laughing and drinking in the rear seat. I heard one of them say something about stopping the other 'damned driver,' and turned just as he threw several bottles into the road under the pursuing car. The two tires on that side ran over the broken glass and then the big car swerved into our car, and—that's all I know," she quickly finished.

"Well, I won't publish it," he promised.

She actually wept from sheer gratitude.

"She only knew the driver, Tucker," thought Greenfield on his way back to the office, "and because of that she got in, and then the accident! Poor girl! It's a devil of a thing to make her suffer for this. She didn't realize what it might mean to her good name when the news was published that she was in a car with a pack of drunken men and women. Opinion will condemn her—excuses such as she would give truthfully will mean nothing. And just because

her old man is an enemy of my paper I'm sworn to war on his daughter—like the devil I will! I'll kill the story first!" And he did.

But he was uneasy in mind until he told Morgan a little later. Morgan would listen to nothing Greenfield had to say in defense. He got his order on the cashier and left the building immediately after getting his money.

Greenfield had made a promise to Miriam Young not to print the story, and he knew that Young's paper would not carry a line of the occurrence; at least, no mention would be made of Young's daughter.

He'd acted like a man, and look at what he got.

Miriam thanked him in a letter for his courtesy. The letter was forwarded from the *Chronicle*. He had not seen her since then, nor had he heard from her. Why should he, he asked himself.

Then he commenced calling himself all kinds of names, and added that he was a 14-k. fool. She'd not recognize him in a hundred years if she saw him again. And here he was mooning over her, and falling in love, and he had only met her once. The daughter of the town's richest contractor!

"I'm an idiot," he said, then set about packing his bag.

He thought of the hold-up and smiled.

On Monday he was in Sharpsville. With his bag in hand, he sought the hotel. In a short time he was given a room, in which he remained the best part of the day, going over several newspapers and magazines.

About dark he sauntered toward the bank, and stood a few minutes in front of it and nodded.

"Pie," he said. "It's a wonder some one didn't hold them up long ago." He noticed groups here and there talking. No one paid any attention to him. After learning as much of the outside of the bank as was possible, he went back to the hotel and ate dinner.

After that he spent a few hours at the movies and played a game of pool with the proprietor of the billiard-room in the hotel's basement. A strenuous day, he thought, as he prepared for bed.

"It'll be easy," he reassured himself. "I'll wait until Friday, just to make sure that no guard is around the bank. The best time should still be from twelve-thirty to one-fifteen, as the paper stated."

Friday dawned, and Greenfield was awake with the birds.

He had a refreshing bath, which put his blood in rapid circulation. Then he took a brisk walk for an hour and a half. Breakfast followed.

His bag was packed. He had a piece of wood wrapped in brown paper to shove through the handles of the door. The Colt was in his pocket, and the folded bandanna in an inside coat pocket.

He waited coolly for the zero hour and felt no qualms. There seemed no objections from his conscience—if he had one.

At ten minutes to one he was approaching the bank. Everything seemed just right. A few idlers were to be seen; no police were in evidence. A street-car was disappearing down the street toward Myersville.

At the bottom of the stone steps he paused, took a final look up and down the two streets, and nodded to himself. He was about to climb the steps when the door opened and a man with a bag backed out.

"Must be a depositor," Greenfield thought. "Nearly bumped into him," he grinned. He watched the other man as he attempted to close the door. Curiously he wondered why he took so much time. Then the other man put the bag down, slipped an object into his hip pocket, and then took a mask from his face, which Greenfield had not seen before. And then Greenfield knew what was happening and started into action. The man on the top step had got there before him. The disappointed Greenfield pulled the gun from his pocket as the other man turned. He would have to hold up the hold-up man.

The bandit dropped to one knee as he fired, but the bullet went over the ex-reporter's head. Greenfield was grinning evilly; his gun spat once—twice—after careful aiming. He felt himself to be standing on the side-lines watching the whole thing, a disembodied spirit wishing himself good luck. He had no thought for himself as

a human being, only cold anger that surged up, chilling his brain. Each fired again. Greenfield could not see the effect of his shots; he heard the bandit's bullets whistle over his head. He commenced mounting the steps, one at a time. It reminded him of the days of coldly calculated warfare in the trenches. He reveled in the smell of the burnt powder. Now he could see the set of the other man's jaw; a flicker of pain convulsed the bandit's face for a second, then fear ran riot. A bullet from Greenfield's gun found his antagonist's shoulder, and another the arm, then he sagged slowly upon the step. Greenfield knew he had one shot left; he came up the remaining steps, holding his revolver loosely, pointing toward the prostrate man. Suddenly Greenfield saw himself looking into the other's gun. Greenfield fired—there was no report from the other's revolver; the last shot in the bandit's gun was never fired. At his feet lay the bag. Greenfield ran and picked it up, but he had no opportunity to get away with it.

A surge of many people came around the corner when the firing ceased. It would have been impossible to go through them. He paused irresolute. The smoking Colt in one hand and the bag in the other, he represented to the people below him a picture of right conquering wrong. Suddenly his shoulders sagged. Again he had been defeated. It would be useless, he knew, to face that crowd. He had been beaten. Five minutes sooner he would have caught the hold-up man inside the bank, with an even chance of getting away—but now the job was all done. He smiled grimly, dropped the bag, and pulled the wood from the door handles. The bank clerks poured out.

They saw on the top step a man sprawled lifeless, his staring eyes hunting the clouds in the sky. They stared at him in return.

"Gibson—the cashier!" they cried. Greenfield chuckled.

The blood of the dead man was staining the steps of the bank, as one of the clerks stooped to learn if he was conscious. He arose with a negative shake of his head. The reporter knew that without going near him.

The police and an ambulance had been summoned and they arrived together. The doctor pronounced the man dead, and the police allowed the body to be taken away. Greenfield gave his name and address, and when they found he was at the local hotel they allowed him to go.

"I don't know how you came to be toting that gun, or why you were here at this opportune moment," the detective said, "but you got him, Greenfield, and that's everything," he winked.

Greenfield left without a word and sauntered back to the hotel, where he met the curious eyes of all in the lobby with indifference. He was trying to think. He couldn't comprehend the meaning of the whole thing. The cashier was dead, the money safe. He was as poor as ever. He shrugged his shoulders as he sat down in the chair in his room with the door locked.

"If this don't beat hell," he observed to the bedpost.

Could the bedpost speak, it probably would have said:

"It sure do."

Saturday, Mr. Manville, the president of the bank, called Greenfield to his office. A special meeting of the officers and stockholders had been called. All night the bank's bookkeeper and two public accountants had been going over the books. It was as the president surmised. A shortage amounting to very near seventy-five thousand dollars was disclosed.

He explained this to Greenfield. The reporter took it all calmly, wondering why he had been called in to hear the bank's troubles. It didn't interest him any. He would have made the bank suffer a larger loss had luck not failed him.

The president complimented him and thanked him.

"Don't need to thank me, gentlemen," he said, clipping his words short. "I was doing my duty." He laughed inwardly. During the night he had decided to play that he was on the scene trying to find the hold-up man. Of course the rôle was flimsy, but, being a reporter, though out of a job, they might pass it by. They did.

"Your duty?" the president asked.

Greenfield wasn't averse to lying, if he thought that would help him.

"As a citizen"—he fished in his case for a card—"and as a reporter. At present I'm out of a job, but I think I can find one easy now."

"You are not a detective, then?"

"No. Just a reporter."

"Lord," the other laughed, "what caused you to come here—at the time you did?"

"I had a hunch the man with a gun and mask coming out of a bank looked suspicious. There was something decidedly fishy about the whole thing. I really had nothing to go on but what I chanced to see, but I did strike it luckily, didn't I?"

Several of his listeners smiled. The story of his gun-work was borne out by the statement of the coroner that his six bullets had found lodgment in the various parts of Gibson's body. Such a combination would stop any man. But the final shot was what finished Gibson. The paper never knew that Greenfield was as near insane with the feeling of defeat at the moment he fired that last shot as any man could be and yet recover entirely. He had calmly taken his spite and vengeance out on the other for interference in his plans. His ill-feeling toward Morgan also had an outlet in his cold anger. Now, the cashier dead, he felt no more the rush of indignation. Just utter defeat.

"U-m-m," Manville murmured. "You say you're out of a job?"

John Greenfield nodded, and told the circumstances, indifferently.

"The *Morning Chronicle*, eh?" Manville walked to the telephone in the booth at a corner of the board-room. He closed the door and for several minutes he was closeted therein. Finally he came out with a satisfied smile.

"Just wanted to verify what you said," he explained. "Now"—he turned to the other men—"I think what I'm going to say will interest you each and every one. If you don't agree with me, state your objections when put to the vote. Greenfield, here, has cleared up a deplorable situation, for which we can never cease to thank him. It led to an examination of the cashier's books and disclosed a defalcation amounting to almost seventy-five thousand dollars. It showed that Gibson lost his nerve when the first hold-up occurred. That was a real hold-up. He had never attempted to cover his crimes, which leads us to believe he must have been doing it for some time, but always had the luck to be able to put back what he had extracted. Possibly they were relatively small amounts. Again, probably he grew bolder, and when the hold-up occurred last week he doubled the actual amount of the money the hold-up man took. In this way the missing money would all be accounted for. But he needed more money this week—correspondence found at his residence bears out our knowledge of the fact—so he helped himself, and planned to make the bank stand another apparent hold-up. He would have placed the necessary amount back to clear himself, but would have kept the difference with which to play the market. But he was stopped—forever." The last word was almost a whisper, the only time that the least reverence was shown toward Gibson.

Manville's hearers nodded.

"I move we give Greenfield a rising vote of thanks."

That made John Greenfield shudder. After all his risk he was to receive a rising vote of thanks—all because he was five minutes late in getting to the bank to rob it himself. Fate *is* a funny thing. Why didn't the old fool shut up and allow him to go, he wondered.

Manville was holding out his hand, a smile on his face—a kind, benevolent smile, such only as an old man like himself could give. Greenfield took it; there was nothing else he could do.

"A rising vote of thanks," he heard, "and this check for five thousand dollars." Manville looked around. "Any objections, gentlemen? No? The 'ayes' have it then. Passed unanimously."

John Greenfield never cracked a smile. He couldn't. His muscles no longer seemed to answer his brain's commands. Presently he found himself alone with President Manville. The other stockholders had shak-

en Greenfield's hand, and personally thanked him for what he had done, but he didn't realize that. He came out of his reverie to find Manville speaking.

"Greenfield, your newspaper job is waiting for you—with a raise. A man who would suffer the loss of his job for the principle of playing fair the way you did should never have been humiliated."

"But I refused to do as I was ordered."

"Granted. I wish to go on record that hereafter the policy of the *Chronicle* will be, play *fair and square with every one.*"

Greenfield looked surprised.

"How can you dictate that newspaper's policy?" he asked.

Manville smiled patiently, then let go his second bomb.

"You see, I head the company of men who control the *Chronicle* as well as other papers throughout the State, and our politics have been rotten. We never had a policy except, maybe, 'a-dish-of-dirt-a-day.'" His hand rose and fell heavily on the oak desk. "So what I say goes—now—and hereafter."

For a second Greenfield was aghast. Then he tried to smile, but it was a sickly failure. He accepted the other's proffered hand, and he felt guilty.

"Thanks," was all he could say, and the word stuck in his unworthy throat.

As he was going out Manville stopped him.

"Oh, by the way, Morgan is no longer with the *Chronicle*."

"But," smiled Greenfield, "I guess Miss Young is at home, and it will be queer if I don't see her tonight."

UNSANITARY JAILS

THE State Prison Commission severely criticizes several places of detention for prisoners in New York City in the report of an investigation it has recently completed.

The First District magistrate's pen is declared to be unfit for human beings and is condemned as unsanitary. The Second District Magistrate's Court pen at Stapleton, S. I., the commission reported, is highly dangerous to the health of the prisoners. Although it is a room only eleven feet square, it frequently holds as many as twenty prisoners at a time. It is right over the boiler room, the heat in winter often going to 90 degrees. Recently a man charged with murder was housed there for three hours. He was then removed to the county jail, seven miles away, in an open vehicle. Pneumonia resulted and he had to be taken to the Staten Island Hospital. Closed vans were recommended.

The police station at Tottenville, S. I., was found to be overcrowded and unsanitary. The commission recommended an outside yard for the prisoners to exercise in and the supplying of food to those confined there for some time.

The commission declares that the Tenth District Magistrate's Court pen in Brooklyn is not adapted for the purpose for which it is being used. Prisoners, men as well as women, are housed in dark and damp pens, situated in the basement. These pens are frequently overcrowded and cannot be kept clean. Similar criticism is leveled at the Fourth District Magistrate's Court in Queens. It is declared to be unsafe for the detention of prisoners and deplorably lacking in ordinary sanitary equipment.

That methods employed in New York State prisons are antediluvian in character and that Sing Sing, Auburn and Clinton "reek with revulsion" was asserted by Dr. William Lathrop Love, State Senator from the Eighth District, Brooklyn, and chairman of the Commission of Penal Institutions of the Senate, in an address before members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lenox road, Brooklyn.

Dr. Love, who has completed a tour of inspection among the prisons, said that he is convinced that Comstock is the only one in New York State which is sanitary, healthy and mode—

The Long-Fingered Hand of Science

By BENJAMIN CALL

THE very first uncurling of the fingers of the gigantic hand of science began when the first wood-burning, unreliable toy engine hurtled and bumped its way along tracks so narrow and so badly constructed that they spread as soon as the "train" had passed over them.

Up to that time any criminal who had a fast horse and some money in his pocket could all but smile at the idea of being caught. Up to that time highway robbers infested even the great roads outside of London and were seldom found within the coils of the law. Housebreakers operated, passing from one part of the country to another, and "working" everywhere and passing on before the news of their activities in the former places could be forwarded.

To see what the world was, within the memory of our own grandfathers, we have only to read the accounts of conditions at the back of Europe in some of the disrupted small states, where the only safety of a household lies in its ability to make the dwelling into a fortress.

If a business firm had a large sum of money to send outside their own city, they sent a trusted employee with it, who was armed and who did not even sleep if he could help it. The famous coaches along the chief highways, provided with armed guards, in which all the male passengers were armed, were often held up. As for confidence games, there were practically no protection against them at all.

With the coming of the steam railway, however, one of those long fingers of science began to stretch out and the criminal faintly saw its shadow, etched against the freedom that he had known. When that rickety first attempt at locomotive travel had been replaced, a little later, by trains which could double the speed of the fastest horse, news began to travel ahead of the criminal, no matter how he might try to outwit it. With this wholly new means of getting over the earth's surface with haste, newspapers began their march of enormous circulation which they are still keeping up, and the world found that it could read at its breakfast table the news of another State.

No sooner was all this established and on the way to vast improvements than another finger began to uncurl. The cable across the Atlantic shortened the life of the criminal by another notch.

This was the first great crimp put on the international law-breakers, the kingpins of the lot, and they were filled with consternation. One of the first of these gentry to be caught by this means, a swindler who had been in the habit of operating in America until he became known and then going to Europe and reversing the process, was a man of no little foresight, for to the English police who took him as he was getting off an American ship he said: "Well, here's the end of crime."

It was not the end, of course, but it was the beginning of the end. Who will see that end, who can say? But at least we can see its far approach.

The next finger was the telephone, and right along with that was the telegraph. The degree to which this narrowed the criminal world it would be hard for us to realize.

In this, though, as in all else, most of us have forgotten how very recent are some of the developments. Long-distance telephoning, which permits you to sit in New York and talk to a man in San Francisco,

has had its most important developments only recently. The telephone, for long years, was not installed in many private houses. This may not seem to apply, but stop and think how many times you read in the paper: "The moment that the householder, who had been gagged, tied and robbed, could free himself, he called up the police, with the result that the criminal was apprehended as he was boarding a train." The householder who had a telephone twenty-five years ago would have been among the very wealthy.

The telegraph gave the police of the countries where it was in use the opportunity to get in touch with each other practically within the hour. To see how this works, let us take a hypothetical case:

Mr. X., the householder, finds a masked man in his bedroom at midnight, who overpowers X., ties him with the cord of his own dressing-gown, gags him with one of his own handkerchiefs and makes off with all the valuables. The householder is freed by his frightened wife within five minutes of the criminal's leaving and he at once calls up central and says: "Give me the nearest police-station—quick." This is a call that will always be "put through" in advance of any others, so Mr. X. has the desk sergeant at the nearest station within a minute and five minutes afterward the description of that criminal is in the hands of every station in the city. The railway depots are at once watched, but the criminal has beaten the police by a bare margin and got aboard a train. They figure out what train or trains it must have been, even though there is no description at the depots, and this description is telegraphed to every possible terminal of those trains; also, at any wayside stop the conductor of trains will be notified, if there is such a thing as a small telegraph station near there.

In this way the criminal is back, as a rule, where he left from by the morning and Mr. X. is asked to come down to the courthouse and see about it.

This was as much as the police could do for a while. Then the automobile came into being and the criminal and the police began another round in their battle for supremacy. The automobile was a great help to the criminal world for a time, for the police, as a rule, did not have the means by which to procure the high-powered machines with which the greatest criminals were equipped.

In time, as the public became educated to this need, there were funds for the purchasing of such machines and eventually for the equipping of even small police stations with good cars. The police were then on an equality with the criminal, so far as the automobile was concerned, and superior to them, of course, so far as their means of communication, the solidarity of their forces and the willingness of the public to co-operate with them.

The next finger was the invention of the Bertillon system of personal identification, invented by Alphonse Bertillon, of the Paris police, and for years the only method of personal identification worth considering seriously. We are so accustomed now to the use of this system that we forget that aside from it the description of a human being is absolutely without reliability. Using non-technical terms, try to describe a person very well known to you to one who does not know the party. You will discover that there is no possible way in which you can be *sure* that the party to whom the description is offered will be able to identify the person described.

The Bertillon system, by means of patented appliances, measures accurately—to a hair—the height, span of the arms, length of the middle finger, circumference of the head and other immutable points of the human anatomy. Photographs, giving two views of the face, were added, and there was an elaborate description appended of all peculiarities of the body. This narrowed the detection of the habitual criminal to a finer point at once. It is well known that photographs are poor means of identification—even the photographs of those you know will often appear strange to you.

However, with the addition of the detail as to age, sex, color of eyes and hair and skin, manner, education, nationality, health, bodily scars and peculiarities, the proba-

bility of a wrong recognition was much diminished.

The difficulties of this system were so numerous, though, that to find good operators was difficult and the cost of the apparatus and of the filing system was prohibitive for small cities.

In the great centers of the world, however, where the international criminal was and is mostly found, the Bertillon system was another step toward the ending of crime. Paris, France; Lyons, France; New York, Chicago, "Scotland Yard" and the centers of Germany and Switzerland soon had "Bertillon bureaus" which caught many an international crook.

The difficulty, so far as inter-communication with the distant centres, was that the codes in which the Bertillon system had to be put were cumbersome and that only men of the longest experience could be trusted to transmit or receive them. Long years of experience were necessary before even an ordinary operator could be called an expert.

Meantime there had been, off and on, for about two hundred years previous to this, some speculation on the part of scientists as to what were the meanings, if any, attached to the very singular little patterns which different ones had noticed on the thumbs and fingertips of the human hand. The history of how this speculation finally reached an active stage is a long one; the end of which was that Sir William Herschel, of the Indian Civil Service, a high officer of the English in India, decided that the patterns on the fingerprints were distinct marks of individuality and he proved this by inking paper and demanding that all his native workmen, who had annoyed him excessively by substituting for each other when it suited their convenience, should leave their imprints as a means of their positive identification.

The result of this was that substitution of the dark-skinned chaps, who all looked alike to the English, was summarily stopped. There was no such a thing as an identification of the patterns. Herschel tried to get the government to adopt the system, but it was scornfully refused and for years afterward was never heard of.

But the hand of science, though so slow to unclose, never fails to do so in time. In time Sir E. R. Henry of "Scotland Yard" and Sir Francis Galton brought the science to the open and compelled its recognition. Scotland Yard was the first to begin the use of the system, Bertillon—very naturally—fighting against it in Paris, but within the last ten years the system has swept the world and the finger that was not seen is now one of the most prominent and the one, of all, most feared by the criminal world.

The Bertillon system is still used in a great many places, but it is only as a supplementary to the science of fingerprinting, and only as a means of identification in many cases where criminals have not come under observation since the wholesale installation of the fingerprint system.

This is the one infallible means of identification. Sir Francis Galton figured out that there was only one chance in 64,000,000 of two fingers having the same exact pattern.

With this means of identification, the police of the world began a new rounding-up of the habitual criminal. The filing of the new system was so easy that any bright boy or girl could learn to use it with ease in a few months; the apparatus was of the simplest—simply some ink and paper and a piece of tin and a roller—and the process needed only ten minutes.

Involved in the use of the fingerprint system were all the other factors that we have been considering—the train, the steamship, the cable, the telephone, the automobile, the telegraph.

The simplicity of the fingerprint system is what makes it one of the great foes of the criminal world. Any man or woman of the most ordinary education can master it. The cost of the installation is little. Any small police station can afford it. Very small towns, county seats, with only a sheriff for an officer, can afford to make him a fingerprint expert.

At Leavenworth, Kans., is the Central Station, presided over by one of the first

experts, A. J. Renoe. The processes by which the criminal is hunted through this system can best be illustrated by another hypothetical case.

Jewels, we will say, are taken from Mr. Citizen's home, and there is no trace of the criminal. The fingerprint expert arrives on the scene with his specially constructed camera, and squinting here and there on the polished tops of tables and on doors and on window-panes, finds what are called "latent" prints—patterns left on these surfaces by the hand being pressed there. (You can see the latent print if you will handle a drinking-glass and then look at it, turning your eyes somewhat sideways on it, against the light.)

The expert sprinkles this latent print with various colored powders, according to the colors of the objects on which they are, takes a photograph which shows up the pattern and goes down to his office, where he consults his files. No, that print is not there. Very well, he sends the "formula" of the print to the State filing office at the capital. No, it's not there. The State then sends the print on to Leavenworth. No, it's not there. Very well. Then, a year afterward, the process is repeated in another State; nothing very important, but he has Leavenworth. Leavenworth wires back that these are the prints of the criminal from the other States. Another year goes by. Then a man is "picked up" in still another State; nothing very important, but he has the ear-marks of the habitual criminal. If it were not for this new system he would be held a month or two and then let go. He gets his prints sent to Leavenworth, and lo! this small "pick-up" is the man wanted for robbery in two other States. He is therefore tried on all three counts, gets a long term "in stir," and is marked off the slate for a number of years. The long fingers have come out and grabbed him.

Next in order came the "wireless."

This was a tremendous step forward. It jumped across all the places where the cable did not go, and it flashed past the telegraph. Marconi started it, but he is now a past number. Right along with Marconi we have the name of Hiram Maxim, who started a thing that was at first a toy, just as the steam train was.

The aeroplane has been really slow coming into its own as a crime detector and as an aid to the police forces of the world, but there is no doubt that it is also on the way. The first real work that it has done in the way of police assistance is so fresh that it has hardly crept into the papers. This work is the policing of the great northern forests of this continent. The system is in good working order in many of the northwest States and in parts of Canada. There are "report" stations, to begin with. Then the vast areas of forest over which it is impossible to keep ordinary watch are flown over during the fall months, and word is flashed to the report station if any sign of smoke is seen. Fires in the northern forests are not usually thought of as the work of criminals, but the fact is that a good many "wanted" men of the Northwest take to the woods in the hunting season, and their camp-fires are often the cause of the great destruction of property up there. To them must be added the careless amateur hunters, who knock out the live ashes of a pipe almost anywhere in the woods and leave the red peril behind them, and the many woods feuds which cause a white man to commit the colossal crime of burning up a whole forest that he may injure another man.

After all these comes the radio, the last finger, so far, to unfold from the hands of science. The radio, like all the rest, was first a toy, then a social amusement and only now begins to take its place in the world of the workable sciences.

William J. Burns, Chief of the Department of Justice, declared in a recent interview which he gave the newspapers that descriptions of criminals would now be "radiographed" along with other news and along with such items of entertainment as concerts, so that the public may be on the lookout to help the police in nabbing "wanted" men. As an amusing instance of how this works, Burns told of the following instance:

A young man of a suave and assertive manner called one day on a firm dealing

in radio sets and, showing a card, declared himself to be the purchasing agent for a school. After duly inspecting what was offered, he made a choice of a good set, paid a very small sum down, gave the card of the school and took the set away with him in a taxi. A bill, sent to the school, disclosed the fact that the young man was unknown to the authorities. The young man was unknown otherwise, the city was a large one and it looked as if the trail was lost.

The police, upon this being reported to them, thought that they would try a new means of crime detection, so, two evenings afterward, a certain popular young man of that city, who was entertaining a party of his friends with his new radio set, was astounded to hear his own description coming in over the ether, and to have the manner in which the set had been obtained accurately described.

The next day the boy's mother came into the place where the set had been obtained and silently paid the sum due on it. This incident, it is believed, will be historic, for it suggested the possibilities of radio in regard to crime.

Kidnapped children will be "radiographed" all over the country hereafter. Murderers who escape, robbers who get off with the loot, the loot itself, swindlers, confidence-men—all will find their way to the public through the radio.

In connection with all this there are many minor elements of the development of science which, when united to the greater ones, make smaller the meshes through which the criminal must try to escape.

The telegraphing and cabling of finger-print formulas, for instance, has always been a stumbling-block to the police, the length and intricacy being operative against the free use of this means of instant communication on this most vital point; but Jorgensen, the fingerprint expert of Sweden, who appeared before the Third International Conference of Police Chiefs in New York, last May, brought with him a simple little device by which the formulas are reduced to a set of figures, as easy to transmit as a stock-market quotation.

With all this great array of paraphernalia at hand, the police of the world are at last to set themselves, as a co-ordinated body, to the hunting down of the enemies of society. Beginning with Commissioner Enright, of New York City, there will be a "dictionary of criminals" started in every capital in the world and these records will be yearly interchanged. This is the first move of its kind ever inaugurated, and with it there ought to be such a crime elimination as will give us a saner and safer world.

The Third International Police Conference of May, 1923, will be followed by the fourth in 1924, at which there will be present many more scientists than were ever associated in direct contact with the police of the world, although the police for a long time have been using science more than almost any other body of people.

Along with these direct methods there have been the indirect ones—the work of Edward Bayles, of the Paris police, for instance, who has never taken the slightest part in the actual catching of criminals, but who is looked upon by the French underworld with all but superstitious awe. Edward Bayles is a chemist, first of all. He can take a shred of cloth and say, to the last grain, what are the minute spots on it. He can take a few hairs, tightly clasped in the hand of a murdered woman, and tell what was the age and complexion of the head from which those telltale hairs came. He can sift the ashes of a fire and describe the paper, the cloth and the other elements which made them and from that mute witness fasten a crime upon a man. He is a handwriting expert, and knows by heart all the well-known brands of writing-paper in the civilized world.

Coldly, impartially, relentlessly, the science of the world wars on the enemies of the world. All that had been done to combat crime before the last sixty years was as a drop of water in the ocean compared to what has been done in the time which has since passed—the hand which was no more than a shadow is unfolded—the greatest hand that mortals have ever known, whose awe-inspiring potentialities are still but guessed at.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by C. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," By Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by C. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by C. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by H. Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by E. Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. H. Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thomas J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Anderson
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
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77 "The Little White Room," by Edmund Jones.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
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84 "The 'Czar' and the King," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "The Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Edmund Jones.
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110 "A Whispering Mummy," by Chas. F. Oursler.
111 "Trapping the Jewel Smugglers," by B. Poynter.
112 "The Missing Evidence," by Harold F. Podhaski.
113 "A Clue by Radio," by Capt. Jack Static.
114 "The District Attorney's Secret," by C. Oursler.
115 "A Man From Headquarters," by H. Craigie.
116 "The Girl in the Case," by Carl Glick.
117 "A Scientific Detective," by D. G. McDonald.
118 "Number Nine Queer Street," by Jack Bechdolt.
119 "Trailed by a Private Detective," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
120 "The Mouse Trap," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
121 "A Radio Mystery," by Capt. Jack Static
122 "The Clawing Death," by Beulah Poynter.
123 "A Master of Millions," by Chas. Fulton Oursler
124 "The Secret of Room 13," by Hamilton Craigie.
125 "Six Months to Live," by George Bronson-Howard.
126 "Seals of Wax," by Jack Bechdolt.
127 "When Crooks Conspire," by Harold F. Podhaski.
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131 "The Trail of a Rogue," by George Bronson-Howard.
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133 "The Time Detective," by Frank Blighton.
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142 "Blood Rubies," by J. Werner Phelps.
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146 "The Argentine Ruby," by Beulah and Shirley Poynter.
147 "The Barrington Arms Case," by Jack Bechdolt.
148 "Hounded," by Frank Blighton.
149 "Direct Action," by Dr. Harry Enton.
150 "The Footprints On the Ceiling," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.

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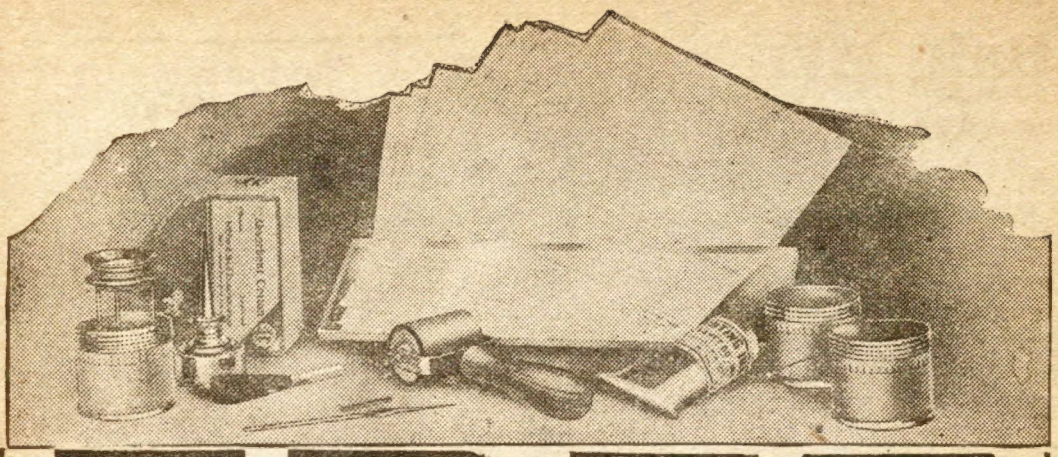

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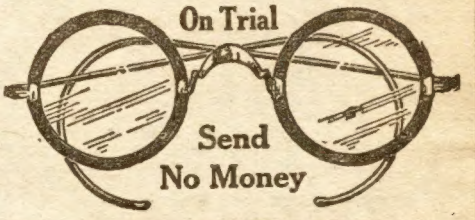

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